

# THE FORTNIGHTLY

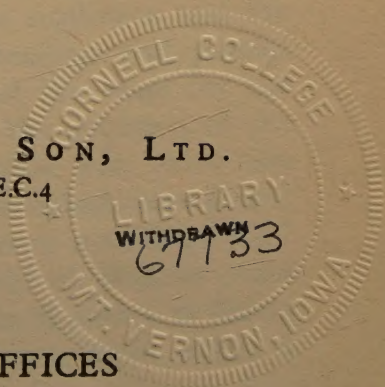
VOL. CXLI NEW SERIES  
JANUARY TO JUNE, 1937  
(VOL. CXLVII OLD SERIES)

EDITORIAL OFFICE :  
13 BUCKINGHAM STREET, STRAND, W.C.2

PUBLISHING AGENTS :  
LONDON :  
HORACE MARSHALL & SON, LTD.  
TEMPLE HOUSE, TALLIS STREET, E.C.4

UNITED STATES :  
FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW OFFICES  
13 BUCKINGHAM STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

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THE  
FORTNIGHTLY

FOR THE YEAR 1917  
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 1917  
LONDON: PUBLISHED BY

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
THOMAS DE LA RUE AND CO., LTD.,  
110, BUNHILL ROW, LONDON, E.C.I.





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JANUARY 1937

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## KING AND PEOPLE

BY J. A. SPENDER

### I

UNDOUBTEDLY the British Press deserves the tributes which have been paid to it for the self-imposed discipline of silence which prevented it from saying a word on the subject on which half the world had been talking for months last year. Yet it is doubtful whether this abstinence was in the long run serviceable to the country. When the explosion came, it had the force of a stunning blow, which left a multitude dazed and perplexed. Had the disclosure been gradual and accompanied by sober comment, the King himself would have been warned of the extraordinary difficulties of the course he had in mind, and it is more than possible that a solution would have been found without any broadcasting of what had passed between him and the Prime Minister. Or, if the King's decision had been irrevocable, the country might have been spared the days of agitation and distraction when it was apparently in doubt.

As things were, the suddenness of the explosion and the paralysis which in a few hours fell on business and politics compelled the fullest explanations, and set the stage for the public performance of a drama in which the situation of the principal performers became more impossible with every day that passed. How could they, the spectators asked, have placed themselves in the position in which they were now displayed? Who were their advisers? In what world of illusion could they have been living? The whole sequence of events, as finally revealed, lacked any semblance of discretion from either a political or a worldly point of view.

The world of romance and the world of reality had, indeed,



become hopelessly confused in this affair. In the world of romance sympathy would have gone out to the King who was determined to marry the woman of his choice in defiance of the conventions and in the teeth of the advice given him by his Ministers. On the stage or on the screen the conflict would have ended in the triumph of the Royal lovers, the flight of Mrs. Grundy, and the discomfiture of the stuffy old men who composed the Government. At the first reaction certain newspapers seemed to think that, with energetic action on their part, it might be made to end so in real life. The King's popularity, great and well-deserved up to this point, had just come to a climax in his visit to South Wales, and it seemed possible to some that he would gain favour with the multitude by breaking through obsolete barriers and aristocratic traditions, and making the monarchy a truly democratic institution. In the glamour of this thought all the perils of backing the King against his Government sank out of sight.

But at that point the world of reality began to break in. It was seen that the King was asking for a compromise between the two worlds which was in fact impossible, and which would have given him the benefit of neither. He was asking for facilities to marry the lady but not to make her Queen, with the inevitable implication that he recognized the impossibility of making her Queen. The briefest exploration of the ground sufficed to show that there was no chance whatever of carrying such a proposal through the various legislatures, whose consent would have been necessary, and that even to raise the question in any form in which it might have to be decided by votes in Parliament or eventually at the polls would be disastrous to the unity of the Commonwealth and Empire. Could the King Emperor ask for a special rule enabling him to be the third husband of a lady who had two divorced husbands living? Could such a thing even be discussed while the lady was still at law a married woman?

Given time for reflection, the question was bound to answer itself. In the world of reality the main function of the Crown is that of unifier and harmonizer of the diverse elements which enter into the political and social structure of country and commonwealth. It stands above party, it respects feelings and



even prejudices, it works by influence and prestige. If the Sovereign acts in such a way as to make himself the centre of controversy, he not only fails to fulfil this part of his duty, but becomes an actual menace to unity. It would be difficult to imagine anything more likely to divide and inflame opinion or to start passionate arguments over a wider area than the King's proposed marriage with Mrs. Simpson. It raised questions of conduct, questions touching the dynasty, the constitution, and the marriage laws, on many of which men and women think heatedly and emotionally. In nine days opinion passed through the whole gamut of the possible emotions, but settled down solidly and all but unanimously to the conclusion that the Prime Minister and the Government had acted rightly in advising the King that his question must be answered in the negative.

*Sunt lacrimæ rerum.* The heart must indeed have been of flint which was not touched by the King's farewell. With people of normal feeling, sympathy and pity attended every stage in the unfolding of this affair. Had the King been a private individual compelled to make a choice between a glittering worldly position and what the world counts a *mésalliance*, the simplicity of his attitude, the courage and the constancy with which he held to it, and his final determination to brave all consequences for the woman he loved, would have won admiration and endeared him to his friends. And this will still be his consolation now that he has made his renunciation. But the general judgment which in the end brought respectful acquiescence in his decision was that there was an essential incompatibility between the duty of the sovereign and the rights of a private individual which could not be reconciled by the compromise that he proposed, and that this incompatibility should have been recognized before the monarchy was exposed to the stream of criticism which he brought upon it in recent months. We may read between the lines of Mr. Baldwin's moving statement to the House of Commons on December 10th the painful stresses of this conflict between public duty and private loyalty. They were all the more painful because from the beginning there was only one possible end to it.

Some surprise has been expressed at the rapidity with which the Prime Minister was able to report the concurrence of the



Dominions in the view taken by his own Government. But here again the silence of the Press had an important result. It left the chief part of the home public in the dark about the prejudicial atmosphere already created in the outside world. For weeks previously the American Press had poured out streams of banal, trivial, and facetious gossip about the King and Mrs. Simpson which inevitably overflowed the boundaries of the United States, flooded Canada, and even percolated to other Dominions. Letters from Canadian correspondents to friends in this country spoke of the mortification and exasperation suffered by loyal subjects of the Crown in the Dominion, and their sense of indignity when the British Sovereign was thus mishandled. It was not a question of whether they took one view or another of the marriage laws, and still less that they objected to the idea of the King marrying an American lady—in other circumstances that would have been popular and acceptable with a large part of the Canadian public—it was simply that they felt a general sense of unseemliness and impropriety in the circumstances as they were now being exhibited and exploited. Their judgment was the quite simple one that the British Sovereign ought not to be in such a position.

## II

But since the question has been the subject of agitated debates and will undoubtedly have its place in the constitutional history both of this country and of the British Commonwealth, it is well to be clear about the points which have been raised or settled, for some of them may recur.

There was evidently widespread misunderstanding about what is called a "morganatic marriage." That is a purely German institution arising out of the caste system prevailing in German noble and German reigning and "mediatized" houses. In these a full marriage, giving wife and children the same status as the husband, can only be between members of the royal or semi-royal caste, the *ebenbürtig*, men and women of equal birth. But a member of the caste may take a wife out of the caste, provided he waives for her and her children the rights and privileges of the caste, such as the status of royalty, and the rights of succession to royal or semi-royal positions. This is



called *matrimonium ad morganaticum*, the last word being a low-Latin rendering of the German *Morgengabe*, since the wife and children of such a marriage were in medieval times entitled to no share in the husband's possessions beyond the "morning gift" made by the husband to the wife on the morning after marriage.

Now, the British Royal family, the House of Windsor, as it now is, is not and never has been in this sense a caste. So far as law is concerned, there is no restriction on the Sovereign's choice and any lady he marries becomes *ipso facto* Queen. It is inconceivable that the British or any Dominion Parliament would pass legislation laying down a new general rule which would convert the House of Windsor into a royal caste, with a morganatic way of escape from the rule of caste. If nothing else forbade, the numerous happy marriages already contracted outside the royal caste would do so. The tendency is not to restrict but to widen the field of choice for the Sovereign and his family. The legislation necessary to enable the King to marry Mrs. Simpson, without making her Queen, would therefore have had to be a *privilegium*, *i.e.*, a law for the particular case, legislation permitting the King to marry the lady in question, but preventing her from becoming Queen and barring the royal succession to the children of what in all other respects would be a lawful marriage. It was always quite certain that such a proposal could not be made in any form that would be acceptable to the public or Parliament.

### III

So far, the case has been considered solely on the ground on which it would have stood prior to the year 1931, when a new Constitution for the Empire was promulgated by the Statute of Westminster. Up to that time the sole responsibility for advising the Crown rested with the Government, commonly called the "Imperial Government," but in fact the Government resting on a majority in the British Parliament. This Government would no doubt have given careful thought to the consequences of their advice in the Dominions and the Empire, but they alone would have been responsible for it, and their responsibility would have been only to the British Parliament. So far



as the Crown is concerned, all this is altered by the Statute of Westminster. In that, Great Britain and the Dominions are defined as

autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate to one another in any aspect of their domestic or internal affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

It has been argued that the words "in any aspect of their domestic or internal affairs" qualify the equality of status by leaving the door open to some decision by the predominant partner, *i.e.*, Great Britain, which would be binding on all its members. But even if such a possibility remains, which is doubtful, it would not apply to the Crown. On that the preamble of the Statute is specific and conclusive :

. . . Inasmuch as the Crown is the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and as they are united by a common allegiance to the Crown, it would be in accord with the constitutional position of all the members of the Commonwealth in relation to one another that any alteration in the law touching the succession to the Throne or the royal style and titles shall hereafter require the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

When, therefore, the King asked Mr. Baldwin whether an Act of Parliament could not be passed enabling him to make a morganatic marriage with Mrs. Simpson, Mr. Baldwin was obliged to reply that such an Act would need to be passed not only by the British Parliament, but by all five Parliaments of his self-governing Dominions. If the King persisted, it became the Prime Minister's duty to ascertain whether the Governments of the Dominions would be prepared to introduce such a Bill into their Parliaments, and whether they thought they could procure its acceptance.

At this point extreme legalists have argued that the preamble of the Statute of Westminster is only a series of assertions which are not legally binding and could not be quoted in a Court of law. But it is precisely the nature of the British Constitution that it is not in this sense a legal code to be interpreted in a Court of law. There is no Supreme Court or any other Court which is competent to try questions arising out of the Statute of Westminster. That must be interpreted, like most other parts of



the Constitution, by the *communis sensus* of the Commonwealth, which for practical purposes is interpreted by their Governments and Parliaments. This may be taken as disposing of a variety of small legal points which might be important if the appeal were to a Court of law, but are of no importance when Parliaments decide.

Thus the fact that the Dominions have not passed legislation in their Parliaments implementing the Statute of Westminster might be held to justify the British Parliament in passing legislation that would be binding on them. It is certain that the British Parliament will not so act, and that, if it did, the Dominions would not accept such legislation as valid without their consent. In this sphere policy has the force of law. "Equality of status" being the declared policy of the British Commonwealth, it is certain that no British Government will go back on it, and no Dominion Government will accept less. In this sphere all the analogies drawn from law and its processes are inexact. The British Commonwealth is a League of Nations without sanctions. It has no force behind it for the coercion of the recalcitrants or the unwilling. Not obedience to law but conformity with a common policy voluntarily accepted by its members is its guiding principle.

Learned lawyers suggested all manner of difficulties in the Statute of Westminster when the question of the King's abdication arose. It has never been questioned that abdication is within the discretion of the Sovereign. It was a favourite device of Queen Victoria's to hint at this possibility when displeased with her Ministers. She had this remedy, she reminded them in 1871, if they would insist on keeping Parliament sitting interminably and compelling her to remain in England until it was prorogued. Taking from the Lords their power to alter or reject measures, she told Campbell-Bannerman when he was Minister in attendance at Balmoral in 1894, was something which "might be obtained from a President, not from her."\* The question at this point was not whether the Sovereign has the right to withdraw, but what measures would be necessary

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\* *Life of Campbell-Bannerman*, Vol. I, p. 171.



to validate the position of his successor and to bar the succession to any children of the former King.

There was no difficulty about this in the British Parliament, but corresponding legislation was necessary in all the Dominion Parliaments, and it was asked with some apprehension, would they all accept the Duke of York, might not some of them seize the opportunity to advance republican ideas, and if one of them dissented, would not the validity of the succession be open to question by all under a strict interpretation of the Statute of Westminster?

The event dissipated all these fears and alarms. The Commonwealth Parliaments acted in unison with Great Britain and with remarkable unanimity and promptness. The Irish Free State alone was unable to resist the temptation of adding something to the fancy Constitution which is the special pride of Mr. de Valera. But even that recognized the new King in terms which make him the head of the Commonwealth in all its common and international affairs, and give legal precision to a status which the Statute of Westminster leaves vague. The rest is unimportant. It is better that the office of Governor-General should be abolished and its attributes vested in an official who commands respect than that it should be treated with contempt. These are questions of manners rather than of law or policy.

#### IV

Nothing can be quite as before after the experience of these weeks, but in certain respects the result is encouraging. The general judgment of the world is that Great Britain and the British Commonwealth and Empire showed uncommon strength and steadiness under a shock which might well have been fatal or extremely damaging to a frailer system. It is acknowledged that in circumstances so compromising to its dignity the British people bore themselves in such a manner as to gain rather than lose in the respect of their neighbours. The peculiar rhythm with which British opinion, gathering slowly, comes to a massive unanimity was again seen at work all round the world. There was a general sigh of relief in all the free countries of the world when the British democracy with its constitutional monarchy—one of the few remaining elements of stability in this shifting



world—was seen to be standing erect after the shock had passed.

Again, the new constitution of the British Commonwealth has had its first test and come out of it well. It was objected, when the Statute of Westminster was discussed, that it proposed no machinery for common action between the self-governing Dominions. Since all were equal and Imperial Conferences could not be summoned at short notice, how should they be brought together at a moment of crisis? The answer has been that the British Government acts as *primus inter pares*. It becomes the Convener of an invisible Conference conducted by cable with the aid of the High Commissioners in London. It disseminates information, hears all the Governments, organizes common action, and in the end speaks for all. But this machinery, if set up, requires prompt and unanimous decisions. The publicity of the world-wide consultation is enormous; all the Parliaments are held up, all the publics are clamouring for information, business is nearly at a standstill. At this point decision was both prompt and unanimous.

Learned constitutionalists have been throwing back for precedents to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but all precedents have to be construed in the light of the new fact of modern publicity. In days when there were no telegrams, telephones, reporters, or newspapers, as we know them, Kings and Governments could act in ways that are impossible in these times. A dispute between the King and his Ministers about a royal marriage might be spun out for months and be known only to a small circle in London. Now it sends a thrill through the Empire and the world. The behaviour of Royal Dukes and their ladies might set London society laughing and provide Mr. Creevey with material for his diaries; but it would not affect the multitude or be recorded by the news-gatherers of two hemispheres.

It has been said that there was no constitutional crisis last month, and technically this is true. The King asked the Prime Minister only the one question, whether legislation could be passed enabling him to marry Mrs. Simpson without making her Queen, and, having received the answer to that, he asked nothing else. It is nevertheless implicit in the circumstances that Ministers would not have consented to a marriage which

would have made Mrs. Simpson Queen. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that King Edward would not have made a proposal which carried the inference that the lady would be unacceptable as Queen unless he had been satisfied in advance on that point. The constitutional point that the marriage of the Sovereign is the concern of his Ministers is therefore involved, though not directly. Mr. Baldwin explained the position clearly and forcibly to the House of Commons. The position of the Queen being what it is in this country, the choice of a wife by the Sovereign comes within the category of things touching public policy and the public interest, on which it is the duty of Ministers to advise the King. It is to King Edward's credit that he avoided a collision with his Government on this point, but the suggestion made in some quarters that the King's marriage is his private concern, on which it is unnecessary for him to consult his Ministers can certainly not be accepted. It is the duty of these Ministers to offer the King advice upon any action on his part which they think may prejudice the monarchy or his own position with his subjects, and where these considerations arise, there is no private domain from which they are bound to stand aloof.

Since the question has been raised, it may be added that a conflict between the King and his Ministers on the subject of his marriage would follow exactly the same course as a conflict on any other subject. It is not necessarily unconstitutional for the King to reject the advice of his Ministers, but if he does, he must find other Ministers who will give him different advice, and these other Ministers would have to obtain a majority either in the existing House of Commons or at a General Election after that House had been dissolved. If they failed, the King would have to recall his former Ministers and accept their advice. We may think it hard measure that any man should be exposed to this interference in the most intimate of private relations, but the wearer of the Crown cannot enjoy its privileges without accepting its liabilities. His remedy is that which King Edward has taken : he may decline to wear it on these terms.

By a curious paradox the British Royal family have enjoyed exceptional immunity from criticism in what is commonly called the age of publicity. A hundred years ago newspapers



spoke with much greater freedom and frankness about royal personages than they have in recent years. During a large part of her reign Queen Victoria, and still more the Prince Consort, were sharply criticized by newspapers, and King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, was more than once severely taken to task by *The Times* and other newspapers. But as Queen Victoria grew old and won respect by her dutifulness and her exemplary life, the custom grew up of regarding the monarchy as screened from criticism, and her successors on the throne have so borne themselves as to offer no pretext for breaking this convention. I think it must be realized that this spell has been broken by the events of the last few weeks. It is widely felt that much that has happened might have been prevented by timely reminders that certain standards of conduct are expected from those who are near the throne, and that prolonged silence on things that have become common talk may only be the prelude to a dangerous explosion when finally concealment becomes impossible.

The art of being a constitutional sovereign is one of the most difficult and delicate of all the arts of government. The influence of the Sovereign depends enormously on prestige and respect, and to maintain this prestige and respect must be a co-operative effort on his part and that of his subjects. In this the Press must play its part, and since newspapers are of all sorts it is not easy to keep the line between the sober comment which preserves respect for the throne, and the vulgar or scurrilous gossip to which royal persons are peculiarly liable when restraints are removed. On the whole it can only be said that it is a lesser evil for royal personages to be exposed to the criticism which is the common lot of persons in conspicuous positions, than that they should live in an artificially sheltered atmosphere which may foster illusions about themselves and their position in the public eye. Stilted phrases of conventional flattery, such as have been customary in dealing with royalty cease to be flattering when they are not taken seriously. Royalty as an institution cannot be fitted into the practice of free States in modern times by any make-believe. It must submit itself to the ordinary judgment of things human and fallible.

By so doing it will gain rather than lose. Valuing the monarchy

as they do, and realizing its immense importance to the Commonwealth, the British people may be relied upon to protect it from malice and injustice. They will specially rally to the new King and do their utmost to see that he is not prejudiced by the difficult circumstances in which he comes to the throne. But there are certain things on which their minds have been disturbed, and on which it would be well to reassure them. In recent years the Crown has had the service of men of long experience in affairs, such as Sir Henry Ponsonby, Lord Knollys, Lord Stamfordham, Lord Wigram, who though not entitled to "advise" the Sovereign in the sense that his Ministers advise him, have in their capacity as Private Secretary been his intimate counsellors and friends. King George V, on coming to the throne, retained Lord Knollys in his service for the first difficult year of his reign, and thus kept the continuity of the constitutional tradition and profited by the experience of a trusty counsellor who had been long in the service of his family.

Some assurance that this continuity is not broken, and that the King has associated with him wise and experienced men who understand public opinion and have been in contact with the Government and know the special condition created by the Statute of Westminster would undoubtedly be welcome.\* In exploiting recent affairs, certain American newspapers have painted pictures of the British Court as distracted between factions, one of which has supported and the other opposed the wishes of King Edward. Fictitious roll-calls of those who belonged to one faction and those who belonged to the other have been presented. This no doubt was a gross caricature, but it must have struck the American observer that the caricaturists assumed the absence of any centre of gravity in the British Court, such as would be provided by counsellors who were thinking not of the consequences in the social and fashionable world, but of the effect on the monarchy and the political situation which would arise, if the King persisted in his intention.

The suggestion which has been thrown out that the monarchy

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\* Since this was written Lord Wigram has been appointed to the new office of Permanent Lord in Waiting, and it is understood that he will act as adviser of the King.—Ed. F. K.



should be furnished, like the Government, with an official secretariat is not, I think, a good one. That would weight the monarchy against the Government and increase the danger of collisions between the two. The monarchy should not be over-officialized; it should be personal and flexible. Nor should the King be limited in the choice of his friends. Asquith has been quoted for the view that the King should not communicate with the leaders of Opposition, but that seems to be a misunderstanding of advice which he gave on a particular occasion in January, 1911, for exceptional reasons which are not likely to recur. On no other occasion did he suggest any limitation on the freedom of the King; on the contrary, he even advised King Edward VII to see the leaders of the Opposition and hear their views. But while the King is free, it is extremely advisable that his ministers should appear in the public eye to be men of discretion and that he should specially avoid the appearance of having an inner circle of friends and advisers who might incite him to act against his Government. In these days a party of "King's friends" would certainly not be tolerated. That might too easily bring us to the edge of Fascism.

The Monarchy is greater than the King. The broad moral of the events of last month is that the Governments and peoples of the Empire will not permit the Monarch to take action which they think prejudicial to the Monarchy. It is an immense advantage to the British Empire and Commonwealth to have a head of the State who is removed from political controversy and need not be the subject of periodic elections, possibly bringing shattering controversies with them. Democratic as its various nations are, the British Commonwealth has no common basis on which it could elect a President. The hereditary Monarchy, accepted by consent as its permanent head, exactly fits the necessities of its situation, and no new institution could be invented to take its place. That being so, to maintain its prestige and to make sure that the consent on which it rests is unquestioned, are supreme interests to which personal preferences and predilections must yield. It was a sound instinct which caused Governments and peoples to recognize this as the over-riding issue in the crisis of last month.

## STRATEGY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

BY CAPTAIN LIDDELL HART

IT is characteristic of British policy not to look far ahead. This habit is carried to a pitch that can only be appreciated by anyone who has enjoyed an inside view of the workings of the machinery of government. It seems to be beyond the understanding of foreigners, especially of the Latin or Teutonic kinds. They find it not only disconcerting but incredible. Hence the undiminished, because perpetually reinforced, currency of the phrase *perfidie Albion*. If you try to give them a realistic picture of the way that British policy works, they treat the explanation with a politeness that barely conceals their suspicion. To them it is but one more manifestation of the subtlety with which the British pursue their long-range designs. I have often quoted Harold Nicholson's novel *Public Faces* as a perfect picture of how the machine works and great issues are apt to be decided. But to a Continental reader, its humorous treatment of the subject seems to convey the idea that it is mere fantasy—instead of, as it really is, proof of the power to see the facts with a true sense of proportion.

The inability of foreign statesmen and diplomats to comprehend the immediacy of British policy leads them into many pitfalls. They misjudge its course by crediting it with a long-term plan—and then stumble again because they fail to realize that underneath its opportunistic surface is not a plan but a principle—or, rather, an instinctive pattern formed by tradition. Sometimes these Continental misjudgments turn out to the benefit of Britain; sometimes otherwise—but they are usually detrimental to Continental plans. And Britain herself has undoubtedly benefited by the elasticity and adaptability which have been preserved by her reluctance to plan ahead. But this tendency, although often an advantage in the sphere of foreign policy, increases the strain on defence policy. Few emergencies have found Britain adequately prepared to meet them. Here is the



clue to the familiar saying that in a war she "only wins one battle—the last one."

The military disadvantages of this dislike of looking ahead were forcibly brought home to the British by the situation produced in the Mediterranean in the early autumn of 1935, which abruptly disturbed our repose. When the reality of the Italian threat to Abyssinia was at last appreciated it produced a rise of popular indignation almost comparable to that caused by the violation of "little Belgium;" and the effect, in pushing the Government forward, was accentuated by the backsliding of the Laval Government in France. Forced to give a lead at Geneva in upholding the Covenant, the British found themselves thrust still more into the foreground by their strategic position astride Italy's sea route to East Africa. This made them the natural target if sanctions were to culminate in war. Italy emphasized the point by despatching mechanised divisions and powerful bombing squadrons to her Libyan colony, close to the borders of Egypt. Britain hastily strengthened her forces here, though it meant a temporary interruption of her Air Force expansion at home and stripping the Army of most of its still meagre supply of modern equipment. More precarious still was the position of her main fleet base at Malta which lay within easy range of the Italian air bases. To keep the fleet there, liable to a surprise onslaught by bombers or to lurking submarines, was a risk that made the Admiralty hurriedly swallow the vocal disdain of those oversea and undersea weapons in which they had been but recently indulging: the fleet was withdrawn from Malta to the far end of the Mediterranean. Here, certainly, it might block the passage of Italian transports, if the League issue was pressed thus far, but how far it could keep a free passage for Britain's own sea traffic was a question that left the British public wondering.

Some twelve years ago, in a little book on *The Future of War*, I suggested that the controversies over the bomb *versus* the battleship, or the torpedo *versus* the gun, tended to overlook the end in the ardour over the means—and that, instead of becoming entangled in an interminable dispute over technical values we ought to "direct our course by the compass of grand strategy." While the power of the fleet might still be paramount

on the oceans, it was clear that it had been strategically affected in the narrow seas by the newer weapons. "The vital question of the future is how this transfer of power over the narrow seas affects the international situation—particularly that of Great Britain, which is concerned with both spheres of sea power." After studying its bearing on the seas around the British Isles I passed on to "the Mediterranean, another long and narrow sea channel through which runs our artery with the East, and where our main naval force is now concentrated. Note that our ships, naval or mercantile, must traverse the *length* of this channel, and worse still, have to filter through a tiny hole at each end—the straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal—while midway there is a narrow 'waist' between Sicily and Tunis barely ninety miles across." After pointing out how the potential *radii* of submarine attack from the ports on the European and African coasts intersected this long single line of British sea communications, the question was posed: "Is it not obvious that if in a future war any Mediterranean Power was numbered among Britain's enemies, her fleet would find it difficult enough to protect itself against submarines, let alone protect merchant convoys and troop transports? When to the proved menace of submarine power is added the potential effect of aircraft attack against shipping in the narrow seas, it is time the British people awoke to the fact that, in case of such a war, the Mediterranean would be impassable, and that this important artery would have to be abandoned. Thus, as a strategical asset, the Suez Canal has lost a large part of its value in face of modern naval and air development—for in such a war we should be driven to close the Mediterranean route, and divert our imperial communications round the Cape of Good Hope."

It is worth quoting this, not to prove that one was wise before the event, but because of its continued bearing on a problem that is not yet solved, and on events that may be still to come. I was by no means the only critic who drew attention to the new dangers in the years that have intervened. Yet when the Italian crisis arose, not only was the main British fleet still stationed at Malta, but practically nothing had been done to prepare a "switch" route round the Cape for our sea traffic. Under pressure of the emergency, part of the traffic from the East which normally



passes through the Suez Canal was actually diverted round the Cape, and hurried steps were taken to send out reserves to the bases along that route. But it became clear that bunkering and port facilities would have to be considerably enlarged if the whole of the traffic was to be sent that way. Also that the naval bases would have to be renovated and developed.

The mentality which had been responsible for the neglect of such obvious precautionary needs can perhaps be best epitomised by an extract from a letter which I received in August, 1935, from one of the highest officers of the Empire: "You have evidently been crammed up, as I fear that both the Government and the public at home have, by the Air propaganda . . . There is only one way in which the Air can win a war, and that is by bombing women and children; and that will never bring a great nation to its knees, but only inferior people. You know perfectly well that the Navy laughs at the Air now. They have got protected decks, and with their 'blisters' and multiple machine guns and multiple anti-aircraft guns, they don't fear them in the slightest."

Close on the heels of this letter the Fleet abandoned Malta—for fear of what it hadn't feared. The letter is significant not merely as an example of the obscurantism induced by the military prejudice against novelties; it shows how the very men who are concerned with the bigger problems of defence are apt, through their training, to focus their attention on mere tactical details, so that they can overlook the fact that the security of a fleet depends on the security of its bases, not merely on its guns and armour. Also, the bigger fact still that the purpose of a fleet is not merely its self-preservation, but to preserve the security of the sea routes.

It is questionable whether this has been fully impressed even by the alarm of last autumn. Since then, Britain has exerted herself to remodel as well as strengthen her naval dispositions in the Mediterranean. Thereby she will be in a better position to deal with any recurrence of an Italian threat to her fleet. But it is not easy to see how any reliance can be placed on the use of the Mediterranean route for her own sea traffic if such a conflict should arise.

Britain's Mediterranean problem has two main aspects. First, that of ensuring the safe flow of the traffic from the East which

uses this short cut. Second, that of maintaining her sphere of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean, and the forces which safeguard her position there. Historically a great change resulted first from the building of the Suez Canal, and secondly from the British occupation of Egypt in the '80's. Henceforth the British had to maintain a considerable proportion of their naval strength permanently in the Mediterranean as custodians of the route.

The strain became severe under the indirect pressure of Germany's naval expansion in the decade before 1914. We therefore came to an understanding with France whereby we concentrated our strength in home waters and France concentrated hers in the Mediterranean. During the war the dangers of the Mediterranean route were demonstrated by the high percentage of commerce destruction that was achieved there in proportion to the small force employed by the attacker—there were rarely more than half a dozen submarines operating at any one time. One U-boat alone attained a total "bag" of half a million tons of shipping. A German naval historian records that "U-boat commanders going into the Mediterranean were much envied by their comrades in home waters owing to the extraordinary possibilities offered by operations in the Mediterranean." Yet this campaign was carried on at an immense distance from their home bases and under the great difficulties caused by the hazardous passage past the British Isles and the lack of convenient bases in the Mediterranean.

After the War, with the collapse of Germany's naval power, the British Navy returned in strength to the Mediterranean, and its main fleet was based at Malta. On the surface it seemed to re-establish the old security of the route to India, and although the continued attention given by the French and Italians to submarine construction caused some uneasiness, the ultimate conquest of the U-boats in 1918 tended to make British naval opinion forget the extreme handicaps under which the U-boat campaign had worked, so that the confidence bred of success in the final issue caused an undue discount of the future prospects of the submarine when employed under more favourable conditions. Such conditions are certainly offered to a guerrilla



campaign in the Mediterranean, waged by a naval Power which is there in home waters.

It is the advent of air power, however, which has most affected the Mediterranean situation. Its influence did not develop early after the war, although its shadow began to stretch across the inland sea. Italy had no serious air force until Mussolini rebuilt it. Spain has never had one. France herself was too remote from the traffic route, and although her African colonies bordered it, they were separated by a wide expanse of sea from their sources of aircraft supply. Even if a war between Britain and France had been politically conceivable, the British fleet and its aircraft carriers might have had a powerful effect on the latter's strategic situation by interrupting the passage of trade and reinforcements between France and French North Africa. Moreover, the scope of shore-based air attack was limited by the comparatively short radius of the machines possessed by the post-war air forces.

The situation has radically changed with the rise of Italian air-power, the development of bombers that have a radius of 400 to 500 miles, and the promised attainment within a year or two of double this radius. Thereby the 100-mile canal from Suez to Port Said has been extended into a 2,000-mile "canal" from Port Said to Gibraltar. Port Said itself lies less than 400 miles from the Italian air bases in the Dodecanese, off the south west corner of Asia Minor. While limited at present, they are being developed. On emerging from the Port Said bottle-neck, shipping might have a short run of sea space with only the lesser fear of being caught in the open. But the route then passes through the mere 200-mile channel between Crete and Libya, dominated by the Italian air-base at Tobruk. An alternative route is round the north coast of Crete, but this passes within a bare 100 miles of the Dodecanese islands. Beyond Crete the routes inevitably converge on Malta, a mere 70 miles from the coast of Sicily and less than 200 from Tripoli. Thereafter the channel narrows until it is less than 90 miles across between Sicily and the African coast at Cape Bon. Before any shipping can emerge from this danger zone it would be in a fresh one, created by the Italian air bases in Sardinia, which lies within 100 miles of the African coast. Thus for more than half the

length of the Mediterranean shipping lies within easy bombing range of Italian air bases, and for fully three quarters might run the risk of attack. The danger will soon grow as the new types of bomber recently designed, and in process of accelerated production, come into general use.

But a new danger has loomed up, even earlier, to menace the one free stretch of the route—and the bottle-neck at the far end. This is the possibility of a militaristic Spain, filled with the desire to renew its Imperial role which is already reflected in some of the interviews given by General Franco, and linked with Fascist Italy by a common ambition as well as by the sense of help received in the course of the present rising. In that quarter, too, Nazi Germany might find scope for developing an indirect leverage on her own neighbours in favour of her ambitions. A powerful Spanish Air Force, supplied or constructed by foreign aid, could be a serious menace to the last lap of the Mediterranean route. And Gibraltar in turn might become as untenable as a base for the British fleet as Malta proved in the last emergency. Strategically, the danger is so obvious that it is difficult to understand the eagerness with which some of the most avowedly patriotic sections of the British public have desired the rebels' success. Class-sentiment and property-sense would seem to have blinded their strategic sight.

The danger would be extended by the establishment of air and submarine bases in the Balearic Isles; and extended still further by the similar use of the Canary Isles—since this would threaten Britain's use of the Cape route. There have been reports, formally denied, of a secret promise of these two strategic points to Italy and Germany respectively in return for help rendered. Though the denial may be accepted, this does not remove the potential danger. The availability of bases in these islands for the possible use of a strong sea and air power would be scarcely less ominous than the actual cession of the territory.

The prospect deepens the dark hue of the Mediterranean's new complexion. It jeopardizes the outlook for France as well as for Britain. France hitherto had, on the whole, more scope for exerting pressure on Italy than the other way round. Her dependence on imported raw materials, and thus on sea communications, was less than Italy's. Unlike Italy, she had ports



outside the Mediterranean ; her sea-traffic from Africa could diminish the chance of interference by hugging the Spanish shore ; it might even be possible to avoid the sea passage by using the Spanish railways. Moreover, Italy's industrial centres, lying close to the northern frontier, would be more endangered by air attack than those of France. A Spain in league with Italy, and developed into a formidable military power, would change the balance heavily to the disadvantage of France—who may find increasing cause to regret the tacit encouragement she gave to Italy's successful defiance of the League over Abyssinia and the consequent enhancement of Italy's military prestige.

But the potential effect on Britain's position strategically stretches further. The Spanish development can hardly fail to have an influence on the steps that have been taken to reorganize the British dispositions in the Mediterranean. When the tension arose over Abyssinia last autumn, the main part of the British fleet was withdrawn from Malta to Alexandria. But this has defects as a permanent base, apart from being in Egyptian territory. Also it lies within bombing range of the Italian air bases in Libya and the Dodecanese—some 350 miles from the former and 400 miles from the latter. These considerations have prompted a study of other possible bases. Cyprus is one. Disraeli secured possession of it at the Berlin Congress of 1878 and presented it on a platter to Queen Victoria with the remark—“ Cyprus is the key of Western Asia.” But four years later its value was eclipsed by the occupation of Egypt, and ever since Cyprus has lain in strategic neglect. After the war, however, the harbour of Famagusta, on the south coast, was improved and enlarged, while in 1931 Imperial Airways temporarily made Limassol a stopping place on their Middle East service. The salt lake near here is suitable for flying boats, while the great central plain forms a natural air base. Another possibility is Haifa, the Palestinian terminus of the oil pipeline from Iraq. Haifa is at present the most secure from air attack, lying some 660 miles from the nearest air base in Libya, and 450 from the Dodecanese. But with the rapidly increasing range of aircraft even the most remote base would be brought within bombing range before its development and fortification could be completed, while the further away that the fleet and its own aircraft carriers

are posted the more its own power of action against an enemy is handicapped.

Confronted with this dilemma, the present inclination of the British Admiralty would seem to be "to damn the risks" and trust in the superiority of its own counter-offensive action, to meet any threat. Preparations along these lines are foreshadowed by the recent statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty on returning from a tour of inspection in the Mediterranean. He declared that there was no intention of "abdicating our position in that sea, or of scuttling from Malta," and added: "It is simply a question of adapting ourselves to the new conditions, and of making the fullest use of our own air power."

The question may not be so simple to answer, satisfactorily, when all the conditions are appreciated—but the determination is clear. Malta is to remain the primary base of the British fleet, and its defences are being strengthened, while the potentialities of Cyprus as an air and naval base are being developed. Cyprus lies 270 miles distant from the new bases which Italy has made in the Dodecanese, and since it offers accommodation for a larger force, while the British also have a superiority in sea-borne aircraft, there is a prospect of converting any threat from the Dodecanese into a boomerang. With superior naval and air force, too, these islands might be effectively isolated from support and supply from Italy. So might Libya, while the Italian colonies, old and new, in East Africa are largely dependent on the good will of the Power which holds the gateway from the Mediterranean into the Red Sea. These aspects of the situation are worth recognition.

Likewise in the western half of the Mediterranean, the new danger to which the French communications with North Africa are exposed does not lessen the inherent weaknesses of Italy, due to her immense length of coastline, the accessibility and vulnerability of her focal points, and her greater need of sea-borne supplies. If she strikes she can hurt, but she runs even more risk of getting hurt. Besides the formidable naval and air power of France, there is the pressure which the British naval forces might be able to exert if they are used with good judgment, and avoid being trapped in harbour. With so great a length of



coastline, the protective screen afforded by submarines and shore-based aircraft might not prove impenetrable, while the strain on Italy's armed resources is increased by the number of her detached territories. The British Mediterranean Fleet has already been strengthened and a large proportion of the new ships now under construction at home are likely to be sent to reinforce it further.

It is a bold bid which Britain is thus making to maintain her threatened position in the Mediterranean by establishing a more formidable deterrent to interference. Inevitably it has some element of a gamble, because of the uncertainty which veils so many of the technical issues of modern warfare. But its chances will certainly be increased or decreased according to the "load" that her forces carry. If they are called on to maintain the use of the Mediterranean as a mercantile traffic-route from the East the odds will be heavily against the attempt succeeding, while the effort will dissipate and endanger their own strength. If the British Admiralty is prepared to abandon this route and divert all normal traffic by the Cape route, its forces in the Mediterranean may play an important strategic part.

The diversion increases the distance from Bombay to England by nearly eighty per cent.—from 5,900 miles to 10,400 miles; from Singapore by over forty per cent.—from 7,900 miles to 11,400 miles; but from Melbourne, only 10 per cent.—from 10,700 miles to 11,800 miles. The increased distance would cause delay, and a consequent check in the flow of supplies unless and until more shipping was employed on the route. But even a delay would not have very serious effects on Britain's supply situation. For only 20 per cent. of her imports at present come through the Mediterranean. And of these 11 per cent. come from countries within that sea, so that a readjustment in the scheme of supply regarding these commodities would in any case be inevitable to meet the conditions of war. But the use of the Cape route for the remainder of the Eastern trade would simplify the strategic problem of the British in a war with any Mediterranean Power. By the virtual closing of that sea as a traffic route it might be more effectively utilized as an area of offensive operations against an opponent who could not disencumber himself similarly.

A people who are anxious for peace and a quiet life are naturally

inclined to look at a strategic problem from the point of view of their own security, and thus to overlook the disabilities of a potential opponent. The way that Italy has enlarged her forces and extended her bases of offensive action has undoubtedly complicated Britain's problem in assuring the security of her trade routes and oversea territories. But in the process of extending, Italy has entangled her bases with those of Britain to an extent that is awkward for herself. This strategic entanglement may prove a check on aggression, and thereby become an unforeseen "bond" of peace.

A new disturbing factor is undoubtedly foreshadowed by the prospect of Spain's development into a military power with warlike tastes and Fascist ties. It is a potential threat not only to the French communications with her African colonies, but to Britain's power to control the western outlet from the Mediterranean. A naval force could hardly be maintained at Gibraltar in face of a hostile air force on the mainland.

These possibilities inevitably increase the insecurity of the British position in the Mediterranean, while they also introduce a new insecurity into the Cape route. Even so, the fresh complications might not prove wholly adverse. When so many heavily armed Powers are confined in so narrow a space, each with their bases interwoven, and that space is being continuously narrowed by the growth of modern weapons, to start a war there would be like shutting up a bunch of mad cats in a cage. The picture, and the uncertainty of any calculations, might deter even the most warlike statesman.



## EUROPE AND THE SPANISH WAR

BY E. H. CARR

THERE is no doubt about the international event which has loomed largest in the public mind in the latter half of 1936. Since the beginning of the century, Spain had scarcely appeared above the international horizon. Her relations with foreign Powers had been smoother and more unruffled than those of any other European country of her size and importance. Now suddenly the international limelight has been focussed on her; and her internal affairs threaten to become a universal issue. The Spanish Civil War can be regarded in any one of its multiple aspects: from the Spanish standpoint, from the Mediterranean standpoint, from the standpoint of world affairs.

By a tragic irony, the Spanish aspect is the one which seems to matter least. In the last stages of the Abyssinian crisis, it became evident that even the protagonists of the "sanctions front" took no more than an academic interest in Abyssinia, and that what was really at stake was not the fate of a semi-barbaric African Kingdom, but the fate of the League. Similarly, it is clear enough today that, whatever sympathy may be felt for the Spanish people, and whatever horror may be excited by the bestialities of the Civil War, the eyes of Europe are riveted not on Spain as a country, but on Spain as the scene of a conflict which may have the gravest repercussions on the destinies of Europe and of the world.

It is symptomatic of this quasi-indifference to the Spanish aspect of the tragedy that the Civil War is habitually spoken of in terms irrelevant and improper to Spanish conditions. Nobody looking at Spain itself would describe the conflict as one between Communism and Fascism. Neither term fits. The foundations of the International Socialist movement in Spain were laid not by Marx the Communist, but by Bakunin the Anarchist. The Anarchists have even today a far larger body of adherents in the Spanish working class than have the Communists; and the

Spanish Communists themselves are divided by the schism between Stalinists and Trotskyists, the latter being the more numerous and influential. If General Franco were defeated and every foreigner left Spain, the chances of Communism would still be slender enough. Nor is there any reason to call General Franco and his friends Fascists. They are nothing so modern as that. There is in Spain none of that disgruntled, nationalistically-minded, lower middle class which forms the backbone of Fascism elsewhere. General Franco is simply out to put the clock back. He wants to restore the mediæval supremacy of Church and landowner which remained intact in Spain until the Great War gave the first big stimulus to Spanish industrialism in Catalonia and the North. One side is getting help from Communists, the other from Fascists. Only in this external, non-Spanish sense, is it a struggle between Communism and Fascism.

The second aspect in which the war can be regarded is that of Italian Imperialism. Italy, if not privy to the insurrection, certainly sprang to General Franco's aid with remarkable alacrity and promptitude. Nor was there much doubt about her motives. Signor Mussolini scarcely even pretended to be interested in General Franco as a fellow-Fascist. Having won a glorious victory in Africa, and vastly increased his prestige in the Eastern Mediterranean, Signor Mussolini was looking about for an occasion to extend his sphere of influence westwards. His ultimate aims are conjectural, and probably not defined even by himself. For the present he holds a useful pawn. Italy is in occupation of the Balearic Islands. It is true that explicit assurances have been given to the British Government that she does not intend to remain there, and that the British Government have every confidence in these assurances. But few people not bound (like the British Government) by canons of diplomatic politeness share this confidence. It is not even shared by the French Government. The French Government are well aware that a potentially hostile naval power established at Majorca is a standing threat to communications between France and her North African possessions. In this aspect, the Spanish Civil War is a drive to make Italy paramount in the Western Mediterranean.



The third aspect of the Spanish Civil War is one of world-wide importance. Spain has become the battlefield of rival political ideologies—almost of a European Civil War. The battle-cries of Communism and Fascism, however unreal in Spain itself, are full of meaning to the foreign auxiliaries on both sides. Italian Fascists and German Nazis fight in the insurgent ranks; and on the Government side are Russian Communists, German anti-Nazis and Italian anti-Fascists. Smaller groups of sympathisers from several other countries are to be found in both camps. But the person mainly responsible for imparting this universal or ideological aspect to the Spanish War is, beyond doubt, Herr Hitler.

The "anti-Bolshevik" complex has been strong in National Socialism from the start. But whereas, during the first two years of the regime, it was directed primarily against Communists in Germany, its principal target is now Communism abroad. The turning-point in this, as in so many other respects, was the Franco-Soviet Pact. By the spring of 1935, Communism in Germany was too utterly crushed for use even as a serviceable Aunt Sally. The drawing of Soviet Russia into the scheme for the encirclement of Germany prepared by the Stresa Conference gave the cue. Since May, 1935, no occasion has been missed of proclaiming Communism, even outside Germany's borders, as Public Enemy No. 1. The Spanish Civil War provided a first-rate opportunity. Herr Hitler has come to fancy himself quite seriously as St. George trampling on the Communist dragon.

The notion that the foreign policies of states are determined by the form of government under which they live and by the form of political theory which they profess is, of course, not novel. When the Holy Alliance set out to guarantee the maintenance for ever of the territorial settlement embodied in the Vienna treaties, it assumed that only absolutist governments could be relied on to keep the peace, and that democrats at home would naturally be peace-breakers abroad. The assumption was so far correct that practically every revolt during the next half-century against the Vienna settlement was the work of democrats. Then Marx appeared on the scene. Hitherto the interdependence of internal political ideology and external policy had been merely a working assumption. Marx turned it into a creed. He denied,

in principle, the possibility of any "national" policy independent of political ideology. When the proletariat of any country succeeded in capturing the governmental machine and in setting up a dictatorship of the proletariat, the first aim of this dictatorship must be to spread the Communist revolution to other countries. Such a policy was not merely right in principle, but essential in practice. For Marx never for a moment believed in the possibility of socialism in a single country.

This policy was consistently pursued by the Soviet regime in Russia in the first two or three years of its existence. Neither Lenin nor Trotsky nor any other Soviet leader had any doubt that the primary aim of Soviet policy must be to extend the Soviet revolution to the rest of Europe and Asia. In this spirit, the Soviet Government encouraged, recognized and (so far as the material possibility of doing so existed) supported the Soviet regime set up in Hungary by Bela Kun and the still shorter-lived Soviet Government of Munich. Serious attempts were made to bring about a Communist revolution in the rest of Germany, in Poland and elsewhere. But by about 1924 this policy had ended in failure, after seriously embroiling Soviet Russia with several other countries. So far as Europe was concerned, it was virtually abandoned, subsequent efforts (such as the assistance given to the British General Strike in 1926) being gestures of no intrinsic importance. In China, the policy was continued for some time longer. Since 1923 a large Soviet mission under the famous Borodin had been endeavouring, with a considerable measure of success, to plant the Communist ideology among the Chinese; and Soviets actually functioned for many years in many parts of Central China. In 1927 Borodin and his associates were turned out by General Chiang Kai-shek.

The year 1927, which also saw the expulsion of Trotsky from the Communist Party, was the real turning-point of Soviet policy. Since that time, Communist ideology has been subordinated to the national interests of the Soviet Union. The international relations of the Soviet Government have been conducted without regard to the political complexion of the other countries concerned. (There was one period of close friendship with Fascist Italy.) The Franco-Soviet Pact committed the Soviet Government to a policy of defending one bourgeois government against



another ; and the invitation to Germany to come into the Pact on a mutual guarantee basis showed that the Soviet Union was equally willing to pledge itself to protect a Fascist Government against attack. So completely has the original ideological basis of Soviet foreign policy now been abandoned.

Unhappily, the abandonment was all too plainly due, not to a change of heart, but to a sense of weakness ; and unhappily, too, an example had been set for others to follow. So long as Italy was the only Fascist Power, Signor Mussolini felt too weak to conduct her external affairs on an ideological basis ; and for many years it was consistently maintained that Fascism was not an article for export. But when another Great Power adopted a form of Fascism, the whole situation changed. Herr Hitler (it was one of his several deplorable borrowings from Marxism) at once began to propagate National Socialism in Austria by exactly the same methods once used by the Soviet leaders for the dissemination of Communism. Signor Mussolini, for sound Italian reasons, disliked these proceedings. But he took his cue from them and, early in 1934, compelled Dollfuss by financial pressure to suppress and persecute the Social-Democrats and set up a Fascist dictatorship in Austria. Thereafter, a stalemate ensued between Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini ; and it was only in the summer of 1936 that they once more found themselves in agreement over their Spanish policy.

But here, too, one may legitimately speculate how far this policy is ideological and how far national. It has already been hinted that Signor Mussolini is more interested in the expansion of Italy in the Western Mediterranean than in the triumph of a political doctrine. Herr Hitler, who seems to have a quality of genuine fanaticism lacking in his Italian counterpart, perhaps sincerely believes in the crusade against Bolshevism. But desire to oblige Italy (who, last July, beat a graceful retreat in Austria) has also been a powerful factor ; and there are certainly many good Germans who would rather see German efforts employed in some less remote and unprofitable field. Materially, German intervention in Spain seems to have been on a smaller scale than that of either Italy or Soviet Russia.

There is no doubt that Herr Hitler is, at the present time, the principal champion of the idea that national interest and a

political creed can be made to march in step and serve each other's purposes. But he has shown some caution in the formulation of this doctrine. Even now, no claim is made to export National Socialism to other countries (except, perhaps, to Austria, which is a German land). Externally, the ideology is a purely negative one—resistance to Communism. In other words, Herr Hitler has not repeated the mistake of the old Bolsheviks who antagonized the world by claiming to impose their doctrine on everyone. His enmity extends, not to all countries who reject National Socialism, but only to those who embrace or support Communism.

Let us now see how this theory works out in the two regions (besides Spain) where German policy has recently shown activity : in Central Europe and the Balkans, and in the Far East.

The Austrian question is a thing of the past. In essence, it disappeared when Signor Mussolini obligingly did the dirty work of eliminating the Austrian Social-Democrats. It would now require only a few minor adjustments to transform the present pale dictatorship into full-blooded National Socialism ; and the transformation will come in due season. The present focus of interest is rather in the relationship of Germany to the members of the Little Entente (or, as one should perhaps more accurately write, of the late Little Entente).

Yugoslavia was under an autocratic regime for four years before the Nazi revolution in Germany. If, between 1933 and 1935, she moved rapidly towards the German camp, it was not through fellow-feeling for another dictatorship, but through dislike of the growing Italian influence in Central Europe. Now that that influence is on the decline, German-Yugoslav friendship appears to be rather cooling off. In Rumania, Germany may from time to time have subsidized and supported the quasi-Fascist Iron Guard. But here, too, the issue is one of foreign policy. M. Titulescu fell not because he was a bulwark of democracy, but because his foreign policy was pro-French and anti-German. Germany wants Rumania's friendship for the sake of her oil wells, and is at heart not much concerned with the progress of Rumanian Fascism. In Czechoslovakia, the converse position points the same moral. Herr Hitler dislikes Czechoslovakia not because she maintains the semblance of



democracy (in fact, arbitrary police powers and the treatment of the minorities make the semblance somewhat illusory), but because she is an ally of the Soviet Union. In the smaller Balkan States, Germany's interests are mainly commercial. Her attitude has never been affected by the changes of regime in recent years in Bulgaria and Greece.

The Far East had seemed, until the other day, rather outside Germany's ordinary field of vision. But towards the end of November it was announced that Germany had signed a pact with Japan. Internationally, this was not very surprising, and many people had expected it many months earlier. From the moment when France and Soviet Russia made a pact against Germany, it seemed natural and inevitable that Germany and Japan should indulge in the corresponding gesture of a pact against Soviet Russia. But the form was remarkable, and shows how fashionable this business of competing ideologies has become. The pact involves, properly speaking, no international obligations at all. It merely binds the two countries to co-operate in the struggle against Communism at home and abroad. "Abroad" clearly means China. For a colourable pretext has been found for recent Japanese encroachments in Northern China in the necessity for dealing with the "Red menace"—those nests of Communism which have been left over here and there in China from the days of Borodin. But except in the improbable event of war with Soviet Russia (in which case the collaboration of that country's two principal enemies may be assumed), this latest pact does not seem to have much meaning. It is almost as unlikely that Germany will do anything about Communism in China as that Japan will interest herself in Communism in Europe.

How, then, does the world look amid this welter of conflicting ideologies and interests? In the one group stand Germany, Italy, and Japan—the three so-called Fascist Powers (though the term is of doubtful application to Japan)—with Austria and Hungary as faithful hangers-on. The other group, consisting of France, Soviet Russia, and Czechoslovakia, is more difficult to label; for though Soviet Russia has just adopted a constitution in which lip-service is paid to some of the external forms of democracy, she remains in essence as much opposed to democracy

as France is to Communism. In order to find a common denominator for the second group, one has to resort to that comfortable and comprehensive term "the Left"—the side, as Heine was wont to remark, of the heart.

But what cohesion may we expect to find in the two groups? From the ideological standpoint, frankly none. Three years ago, the two Fascist dictators were reviling each other in the columns of their controlled press. Two years ago, Democratic France and Fascist Italy were sworn friends and allies. Soviet Russia will choose her friends as readily on the Right as on the *bourgeois* Left if the need serves. There is, in short, plenty of sound and fury, but far less substance, in this fashionable conflict of ideologies; and the fundamental division is not between Fascism and "the Left," but between those who are in the main satisfied with the present distribution of the world's goods as between States and those who, for various reasons, are not.

This classification would seem, in theory, to range Great Britain and the United States among the satisfied Powers, and to reinforce the opinion of those who would like to see this country associate itself with the Franco-Soviet group. Yet there is no doubt that the bulk of British public opinion is behind the British Government in its determination not to commit this country to membership of any group, and (though the weight of public sympathy probably leans to the side of the Spanish Government) to remain strictly neutral in the Spanish Civil War. The arguments for maintaining this attitude seem to me overwhelmingly strong.

First, as to Spain. The bitter divisions between the two sections of the Spanish people must be admitted as a fact. It is true that the insurgents enjoyed considerable advantages. They controlled most of the regular army and, in the early stages, secured a large preponderance of foreign help. But they could not have made so rapid and sweeping an advance without the active support or tacit acquiescence of important sections of the population. In 1919 the anti-Bolshevik forces in Russia had a virtual monopoly of trained officers, and open and avowed foreign assistance in men, money, and material on a scale undreamt of in the present struggle. Yet victory went to the side which received no external support at all. Denikin had to fall back



from his advance on Moscow because the population in his rear continually rose against him. Kolchak had much the same experience in Siberia. No such fate has hitherto befallen General Franco ; and however much one may dislike his aims and methods, it is not possible to dismiss him as a mere irresponsible military adventurer without serious backing in the country. In a land so rent asunder, foreign intervention is a dubious and dangerous experiment ; and the British Government, remembering the incalculable harm done by intervention in Russia in the immediate post-war years, will not readily embark on another such venture. It has yet to be proved that the Powers which have so light-heartedly taken sides in this terrible fray will not have to regret their rashness.

Secondly, as to the general world situation. I have said that the ideological link between the so-called Fascist Powers is not strong enough to hold them together. But will their common interest as dissatisfied Powers prove a more effective and durable cement ? Subject to one condition (which I will mention presently), I think not. The dissatisfied Powers all have their grievances. But they have different grievances ; and different grievances call for different, and sometimes incompatible, remedies. There is little or nothing in common between the ambitions of Germany and the ambitions of Japan. It is unlikely that Germany would gratuitously antagonize Great Britain by supporting Japan against her in the Far East ; and the converse is almost equally improbable. The present association between Germany and Italy seems particularly unstable. Both have interests in Central Europe and the Balkans which might at any moment bring them into conflict ; and if Signor Mussolini is seriously bent on challenging British naval power in the Mediterranean, he will get no backing from Herr Hitler, a cardinal maxim of whose policy is not to contest British supremacy at sea. Whatever the issue in Spain, the partnership between Germany and Italy remains precarious ; and the partnership between Germany and Japan is little more than a gesture. Subject to the one condition referred to, the alleged Fascist alliance will continue to be an unsubstantial dream—or nightmare.

The condition is, of course, that Great Britain—the one Power

which is both interested and detached—should maintain her attitude of detachment. If Great Britain were now to align herself, finally and irrevocably, with the Franco-Soviet group the dissatisfied Powers would be left with nothing more to hope or fear. Fear would drive them into a close and effective alliance and desperation might well hasten the rupture. British policy if it aims at peace, must seek to prevent any hardening of the groups; and this it can only achieve by remaining neutral between them.

Nor is this a policy of mere opportunism. Great Britain has steadily and prudently refused to commit herself to the theory of the sanctity of the *status quo*. She will not, as a matter of principle, range herself on the side of the Powers pledged to uphold the *status quo* and against those who reject it, unless there is in being an effective machinery for its peaceful revision. Article 19 of the Covenant of the League provides such machinery—or at any rate a basis on which it could be improvised. But the fact remains that, until Mr. Eden did so at the last Assembly, no representative of any “satisfied” Great Power had ever made a sympathetic reference at Geneva to the possible application of Article 19.

Meanwhile, Japan has helped herself. Italy has helped herself. Germany will help herself. Rightly or wrongly, we are not prepared to resist by force of arms—unless our own interests are directly attacked. It is time to try the other policy. It is useless to say that a reconciliation between Germany and the League Powers is impossible, for it has not been seriously attempted. The last opportunity was lost through that frigid and formal British *questionnaire*. I am optimistic enough to believe that the opportunity will recur. But it may not recur many times.



## FÄÄULEIN GOES AWAY

BY ERNST LOTHAR

It began almost like a happy day. Fräulein, the nursery governess, opened the bottom drawer of the wardrobe which was as a rule tightly locked, took out a few things and laid them one after the other on the table. They were not at all wonderful things ; there was a brooch of Bohemian garnets, a buckle, a cross carved out of brown wood, a mother-of-pearl enholder, a letter-weight of cut glass, a coloured postcard with a view of Meran, a rosary, a few faded ribbon book-markers— all parting presents from generations of children she had nursed and taught. They exhaled a perfume of lavender. Agatha remembered having seen these treasures once before. That was when Fräulein had taken the place and unpacked her belongings and put the little remembrances in the bottom drawer where they had lain undisturbed for more than a year. Hanni did not remember.

" You were too little then," said Agatha ; and Hanni as usual when her youth was thrown up at her replied, " What was my being little to do with it ? " Full of curiosity, she stood looking at the quite simple though exciting objects. Photographs followed, children's letters.

" Look," said Fräulein, " I was with all these children. That was Rudi, this was from Hans, and this from Lotte whom I've often told you about."

" Are they big now ? "

" Yes, Agatha, all my children are now grown up."

Hanni tattoo-ed with her thumbs on an old Easter egg. Why do you say ' My children,' " she asked. " Were they yours ? Did they belong to you ? "

Fräulein let her eyes wander for a moment over the things on the table, and from the faces turned up to hers. Then she answered, " No, they didn't, of course, belong to me."

The children were allowed to take up each article separately, dust it and lay it in a new glove-case. That was fun.

But two days later when they came in from their walk, Agatha came running to me with her hat and coat still on, in great excitement and said she must whisper something into my ear. Fräulein had been asked in the Park *when* she was going. Fräulein had put her finger on her lips and said nothing. But Agatha knew that she only did that to show that before her she must not say. And was it really true that Fräulein was going away?

Nothing is so cruel as to make children sad. If I told them now that Fräulein to whom they were so deeply attached was really going away . . . how could they understand the reason? Could I explain that the beautiful time of learning at home was over, and now school-days must begin. I tried to think of an answer, but before I could find one she read it from my face.

"Is it true?"

"Yes."

Slowly she took off her coat, then her gloves. She laid the gloves together and rolled them inside out, as she had learned to do from Fräulein. She took off the round brown leather hat and passed her hand over both cheeks. She did it all very slowly, and at every turn the approaching sad event seemed to draw nearer. Sobbing she asked, "Is she going soon?"

I could not bring myself to say that she was going that evening and answered that it was not certain. This seemed at first to give her a gleam of hope, but soon she saw that there was none. She took up her coat, gloves and hat. At the door she stood still and said,

"But I won't tell Hanni. Hanni would cry."

In the afternoon there was the distraction of children visitors. The children played "False Compliments," a game over which there was generally shouts of laughter. To-day there was no laughter. Perhaps the children felt that there was something symbolic in the game, of what was later to happen. That one passes over, without taking notice, what is inevitable and makes much only of that which means nothing—"False Compliments." Fräulein played with them too. Her box was near at hand so that in the pauses of the game she could quickly pop in a few clothes without the children seeing. Now it was her turn for



the Compliment. She regarded all the children sitting together in a row with one comprehensive glance, then she bowed before Hanni. She had guessed right. Hanni was a little embarrassed that Fräulein guessed so easily. For this choosing is really a kind of love-declaration—Hanni would rather it were private. Afterwards the children played at "Race-course" with tin horses and dice, and as only five could play, Fräulein had time for her packing.

In the evening after the children were put to bed she would go. She stooped over her box in which she laid her possessions. How many times in her life, thought the old governess, had the same thing happened. How often she had packed her box and been obliged to uproot herself and go. How often had she taken her heart in her hands to conceal the love from them to whom it had clung. After every secret parting and finding oneself, Adieu, Adieu. As she packed up she thought that her fate was not to be compared with others, though others are in service with strangers and have to go when their time comes and take other places. Only it is not their duty to live with children. Who knows what that means? Year in, year out, to be always with children day and night.

"Fräulein will see to it," say the parents. "Fräulein is reliable." Yes, Fräulein can be relied on. Fräulein has undertaken the mission and fulfils her duty. Fräulein is the first to know when the children are sick, the first to wake and be alarmed . . . "Fräulein should have been more careful, . . . she should have been more punctual." . . . Ah, how well she knows it all, and thinks of the reproaches, the ingratitude as she packs her box. To live the life of others as the whole of one's own life flies away. Every moment of the many hundred days, many, many hours of the hundreds of nights one has to be on guard. During years and years she had watched over every breath of strange children. She knew where the white canvas shoes of last summer were put away; when Grandpapa's birthday came round; what was to be done to make Agatha understand fractions; how Hanni must eat her food. . . . She knew and was responsible for all. Strangers' children in this way cease to be strange. They become part of oneself. Thus she reflected as she stood by her box and put everything in. The

Dictionary and the Correct German Orthography book, and the blue torn exercise book in which she had entered examples which according to her method simplified the art of language instruction ; and there was the cigarette tin with beans in it to help in learning the multiplication tables—the whole outfit of yesterday to serve for to-morrow. She wondered, will Agatha forget the stroke in her division sums when I am no longer here ? She took the *Outline of German Literature* and laid it on her black blouse. So far as that she had not yet got . . . only the “*Vögelchen, Vögelchen, wecken Sie auf.*” Even Hanni knew that. She had learnt it in play from listening to Agatha.

When I am no longer here, she thought, Hanni will miss me. She was so used to me . . . and in the night when she threw off the clothes, who would get up and tuck her in again ? She blew her nose. Noiselessly and gently, as she had taught the children well brought up people did. And now the box was ready.

At supper we had tried to be natural as if nothing was to happen. Agatha ate hardly anything and Hanni who suspected nothing was nevertheless unusually thoughtful. As she was filling her spoon she asked earnestly, “Fräulein, are you angry ?” With an effort we all smiled. No, no one was angry. We talked and uttered a few trivial remarks to keep off what made it so difficult to talk. Agatha, conscious of knowing a secret and feeling little honoured therefore, took part, in her way, in the deception.

“Hanni, wasn’t it fun this afternoon ?” she asked her sister and glanced at me as if to show that she was to be trusted.

“No, not at all,” honestly answered Hanni.

There was a pause during which nothing was heard but the click of knives and forks.

“Next week spring will have come. Everything will be green,” said Fräulein. No one could help noticing that Agatha struggled with her tears.

Next week ! It sounded in her ears so terribly sad. Next week ! . . . Yes, everything would be different then. They wouldn’t be sitting round the table as they were now. A new unknown time was coming. Next week !

I couldn’t bottle it up any longer, although I wanted to. I promised them that in the afternoon of the day after to-morrow



ney should see "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp." This broke the ice a little. Hanni laid down her spoon directly, making a spot on the table cloth, and asked with rising spirits, "Fräulein, may we wear our patent leather belts there?"—thus obeying the law that all permission, all refusals, issued from Fräulein. Unimaginable that it could be otherwise.

"Perhaps," answered Fräulein in a low tone. The answer perplexed Hanni. After all, *was* she angry? With knitted brows she began seeking for a reason. Was it because she had left her gloves to-day lying on a seat in the Park?

The children went to bed. For the last time Fräulein put them to bed. As on every evening for so long, they took it in turns to be undressed and washed. This time Hanni came first because yesterday it had been Agatha's turn to be first. Fairness must be observed.

She undressed the child with the customary competence. First the shoes, then the stockings, the same to-day as always. And she washed the slender naked child's body with her usual careful quick movement of the hands, made the soap foam, wiped it off with her forefinger, steered the sponge firmly round the child's ears so that the hair should not be wetted, and then said as always: "Now the right, then the left, that naughty foot." And Hanni as usual spurted water violently everywhere round her and asked for the duck, whereupon Fräulein was wont to answer: "Either play or wash! You cannot serve two masters at once, Hanni. If you are not good directly, I shall go away and never come back."

To-day she didn't say that. Instead she brought the duck, and the unexpected rendered Hanni speechless. She went to bed with the duck, the wet duck, and even this was suffered by Fräulein. . . . What could it mean? Agatha knew only too well. Soon she too was undressed, as on every other evening. Fräulein stood between the two white beds and said, "Now, children, say your prayers." And the three together prayed.

There was now nothing more to be done than to draw the curtains, say good night, and light the little green lamp. But before she did this she went to each bed, took each child in her arms, held her close, very close to her heart, and kissed her on the eyes, mouth and forehead. Then she murmured something

that might have been good night and lit the little green lamp and waited till they fell asleep.

They slept, and once more she looked round the room where for so long she had been at home. She saw the pictures of Wind Moon and Rain which she had herself framed ; the curtain which she had made and embroidered ; the inkstain on the bath-mat that couldn't be got out with lemon—and the toy which stood in an orderly row on the two cupboards and the chest-of-drawers. But the Teddy Bear was hanging a little over the edge—quickly she put it straight and without looking in the glass she put on her hat, went to the door on tiptoe and opened it softly.

But when she stood with us outside on the landing, and none of us could quite command words in which to say good-bye, Agatha suddenly appeared in her nightgown and bare feet. She was pale with eagerness. "Fräulein," she said, "this is for you, so that you will remember us, too." It was her new silver hair-snood, and Hanni's cornelian slide. She gave them to Fräulein and ran back to bed on the brink of tears again. In bed she held her breath and listened—Hanni was fast asleep. She could not understand all that was being said outside, she only caught the words "Promise" and "Certainly" and the "Good-bye" twice. "Good-bye."

Then the front door opened and shut. All was quiet, so dreadfully quiet ! The child lay with wide open eyes. Now she knew, knew what gave pain and made one unhappy. It was "Good-bye, Good-bye."

[Translated by Beatrice Marshall]



## THE ARMY RECRUITING PROBLEM

BY EARL WINTERTON, P.C., M.P.

UNTIL I and others, both by writing and in speeches, called attention to certain aspects of the pay and conditions in the Regular and Territorial Army which were a deterrent to recruiting, it was assumed that the general reluctance (because of pacifist propaganda and for other reasons) of young men to serve in the armed forces of the Crown was the main cause of the serious deficiency.

The figures of entrants into the Navy and Air Forces appear to disprove such a view, since sufficient young men and boys of good quality are entering both Services. It is indeed notable that the expansion of the Air Force has produced a larger, not a smaller, pool of applicants from which to choose. The risks and hardships of service in the Navy and Air Force would not presumably be less in time of war than those to which soldiers would be exposed, while if to wear a uniform and serve in the armed forces is an offence in the eyes of pacifists, and those who pay regard to their views, it is not less so in the Navy and Air Force than in the Army.

Clearly there are, therefore, factors militating against recruiting for the Army which do not apply to the other two Services. I may say, in passing, that when I made this statement at a regimental dinner recently it was quoted in the column of a Left Journal in which fatuous or unconsciously humorous remarks are held up to ridicule. No doubt to those who, in the slang of a decade ago, were known as "Parlour Bolshies," the lack of recruits for the Army is not only amusing but most heartening. For the very reason that people of this temper are rejoicing at the failure of Mr. Duff Cooper's campaign to get recruits, it behoves the rest of us to inquire into the causes.

Members of the Government themselves, by their constant asseverations that there is nothing wrong with the spirit of our young men, followed by plaintive queries as to why they do not join the Army, cause their speeches to have the opposite effect to that which they intend. They give the impression abroad that pacifism and anti-patriotism have a far larger hold than they have. They rejoice the hearts of the British "Reds" and "Pinks." Far better would it be to announce an immediate Royal Commission or Committee of Inquiry into the causes of bad recruiting. No doubt pacifist propaganda, and the opposition of certain sections of opinion to the Forces would then be found to be having some influence, but I am convinced that other causes are infinitely more potent. They can and should be removed, though in some cases it will take time.

First and foremost among them is the question of pay. Serving officers of all ranks with whom I have discussed this matter are all but unanimous that low pay is the principal deterrent to recruiting. On the other hand, more than one ex-Regular officer who left the Army before or at the end of the War has expressed amazement to me that that should be so. They point out, quite accurately, that pay is better than before the War; further, that conditions for the soldiers' comfort, such as better cooking, a more efficient canteen service, etc., have also improved. That also is the fact, though a certain amount of hideous, comfortless, unhygienic barrack accommodation—some of it in the shape of huts which were erected during the South African War—still remains.

Mr. Duff Cooper's attention has been called to this matter, and also to the Esher Committee's condemnation of such barracks more than a decade ago. In his replies he has shown that progress is being made with the improvement and rebuilding of barracks. But the process is still too slow.

The answer to those who express the astonishment to which I have referred is this. Compared with his predecessor before the War the soldier of today is better paid, provided with more amenities, and often, though not invariably, better housed. But the contrast is even more favourable in the case of the average civilian wage-earner in almost every trade and industry. The standard of living and comfort of the man in work has immensely



improved since 1914, and even the unemployed in the worst areas are in possession of a higher real income than those out of work before the War. Thus, so far as the Army is in competition in the labour market for the best type of boy or man of the labouring class, it has not kept pace with its rivals.

The actual money wage which the soldier receives per week after he has been fed and housed looks reasonable enough, but from that has to be deducted not only possible punishment stoppages, but actual compulsory contributions to regimental funds—no doubt most beneficial to the soldier, but a drain, notwithstanding, on his financial resources. A Brigadier with a fine record of service said to me recently with great emphasis that he would like to see all compulsory stoppages from pay—penal or otherwise—made illegal under King's Regulations, because they were both unfair and inimical to recruiting.

Another aspect of this case was put to me by the very intelligent commanding officer of a famous battalion, a man who has had a most successful military career. He said: "My lads are of a good type, though I can't get enough of them. Mostly they come from respectable working-class homes in which they are accustomed to a higher standard of living than the men who went to France with us in 1914. Try as we do to eke out rations, we can't give them a meal at night after their tea. The result is that most of them buy themselves supper with their own money. I don't blame them; they are growing lads and need it."

Incidentally, I must observe at the risk of causing offence that if and when officers of the type to which I have referred, each of whom had a long period of regimental service in the trenches during the War, reach the topmost places in their profession, I believe that, given a competent Secretary for War and a friendly Government, much more will be done in the way of removing abuses, anomalies and anachronisms from Army life than is done today. We have had a succession of able, indeed brilliant, men in high positions in the Army since the War, but the majority have been on the Staff continuously since 1914. They are not "soldiers' Generals," and since the days when they were regimental officers there has been a vast change in the outlook of the class from which recruits are drawn—and

also, though not necessarily an unfavourable one, in that of the public towards the Army. "The 'brass hat' type of mind" has come to be almost a *cliché*. No doubt this is partly due to war books, often patently unfair to the Staff. Nevertheless, there do seem to have been too few "fighting soldiers" in key positions of command since 1919. A bachelor soldier who is anxious to help his parents by sending them weekly contributions from his pay or one who wants to give his "girl friend" a good time, like any of his fellows, by taking her to cinemas or tea shops, is less able to do so than many unmarried young men of similar class in civilian life.

Then there is the question of marriage. At the risk of wearying readers by constant quotations from my own circle of acquaintances, I think I cannot do better than repeat the very pointed words on this matter of a friend who is a General: "The soldier of today, to his credit be it said, is more anxious to 'make an honest woman' of his girl than the pre-War soldier. Much of the crime and desertion in the Army is due to this cause, since so few are allowed to marry on the strength." Of course some of these considerations concerning pay apply *mutatis mutandis* to the other two Defence Forces. But the young sailor, being usually on a ship, has less opportunity to spend his pay than the soldier. Marriage also is easier for him, since he spends less time on foreign service. I have urged before, in print and in public speeches, that if the taxpayer wishes to preserve the voluntary system he should be willing to face the burden of higher taxation in order to make the pay and conditions of the Army more attractive. Here duty and common sense run together, and the Government should no longer let this injustice remain.

The length of time spent by the soldier on foreign service is unpopular with potential recruits. This is probably due not so much to a decline in the young Englishman's taste for travel and adventure, as to the fact that amenities at home, for the class from which soldiers are drawn, have immensely improved in recent years. The cinema, cheap travel by bus, tea-shops, every form of spectacular professional sport at low prices of admission, and the universal bicycle did not exist in the time of *Soldiers Three*. The modern young man does not want to give up all these amusements of his spare time and go abroad where,

in addition, he may have to live in a difficult climate. Perhaps also he may find himself in a foreign station where his is the only unit, and where unpopular guard duties and parade ground movements are his main duties. If he is a keen soldier and a man fond of human companionship he will miss the cheery communal life, with its many sporting contests, and the field training of a large garrison in England. I believe that before the War, when British troops were stationed in South Africa, that was a popular station. It had the double advantage of a good climate and a white population of both sexes in which "other ranks" could find friendship and companionship among people of their own station in life. Few British Army stations abroad have both those advantages today.

Military opinion inclines to the belief that the Cardwell system must at least be modified. This could be effected by the substitution of specially enlisted long-service garrison battalions for certain units in the interior of India and in some colonial stations. The cost would be greater, but it would be justified if it improved recruiting. Further, I believe that if the Cardwell system could be confined to potential striking forces, such as the Northern Army in India and the Force in Egypt, the efficiency of battalions, regiments, and batteries would be automatically improved. Because at no time would they be serving, as often happens now, in places where brigade training, let alone divisional training, is impossible.

It may be objected that there would be as much difficulty in getting men to enlist in these long-service battalions as it is to get recruits today. I do not think so, for it offers a career. In fact, the supply of suitable candidates—all British ex-soldiers who have finished their Reserve Service—for positions as sergeants in the Calcutta, City of Bombay, and other Eastern Police Forces, exceeds the demand. These men are content to live ten or fifteen years in the East, usually without a single trip home, because they are well paid, and, in the case of married men, there is good accommodation for their wives and families. I believe that the same considerations would apply to the Force which I suggest. Men might be enlisted between the ages of 20 and 25, and serve for ten to fifteen years. The Government of India could, I think, eventually be induced to accept, though



no doubt with some demur, such an amendment of the Cardwell system as I have suggested. But it would cost money and, as Mr. Duff Cooper has pointed out, it would be unfair to burden India with a much heavier Army expenditure at a time when the new Constitution is about to be inaugurated.

I have already stressed the satisfactory flow of recruits to the other two Defence Services. There is no doubt that they are formidable competitors of the Army in attracting recruits. In the Navy marriage is made easier for various reasons. For one thing the allowances are higher and, as previously stated, a smaller proportion of service is spent overseas.

It is possible, under the system of messing, to provide an evening meal as well as tea, and I have already referred to the effect of its omission in the Army. Mr. Duff Cooper, in a recent debate, held out hopes that this defect would be remedied. While fully appreciating his difficulties, we cannot but be concerned at the slowness of progress in reforms. No doubt a further big expenditure of money is involved by most of them, but a Government with a clear mandate for the rehabilitation and re-furbishment of our defences has been in office for over a year, during the whole of which time the present Secretary for War has occupied his office. Grave speeches have been made by Mr. Duff Cooper and the subordinate Ministers of the War Office, in which they have admitted that the present system of obtaining recruits is breaking down. Surely at such a moment, and when for the first time since the War the Treasury is willing to spend money freely for defence, there was never more need for urgency and quick decisions to improve the attractions of Army services. It is true that none of them can wholly bridge the gap between the opportunities of civilian employment which the sailor or airman can command, and those open to the ex-soldier. The very nature of the service of sailors and airmen makes them, in most branches, ready to step into positions requiring technical engineering knowledge and a high standard of artisanship. Many branches of the Army afford no such training or experience. The Vocational Centres do something towards building this bridge, and Mr. Duff Cooper's promise to endeavour to give men about to be dis-

charged a longer period of home service will increase the scope of these centres.

One must accept the fact, however, that, despite increasing mechanization, a large proportion of discharged men will continue to be unskilled workmen. Surely here Government Departments can be of more assistance in offering employment. The Postmaster-General stated recently that fifty per cent. of vacancies for postmen were kept for ex-Service men. This percentage should be increased, and it is hard to see what administrative difficulties stand in the way.

In making a comparison between the relative attraction of service in the three Defence Forces, an interesting argument is sometimes advanced. I myself cannot claim to possess sufficient knowledge of the subject to accept or reject it. But I will set it out. It is as follows :

Discipline is not weaker in the Navy and Air Force than in the Army. In fact, in the Senior Service it is, in a sense, more rigid. There is certainly less personal contact between officers and men on a ship than in a battalion. But, so the argument runs, this is accepted by all but a few "hard cases" among sailors and airmen, because the safety of the machine, whether 'plane or ship, depends upon the efficiency of the men manning it. That efficiency, in its turn, depends upon instant and unquestioning obedience to orders. "Liberty and equality," as the Captain of the French frigate is supposed to have said during the Revolution, "may be all very well on shore, but they are damnably out of place on board ship." The Army recruit, on the other hand, according to this view, sees no sense in spending six months in apparently meaningless parade ground movements. Some of his pals see him doing it through the barrack railings, and he tells others about it ; thus Army service becomes unpopular, especially with young men of intelligence, or who belong to classes which should be able to show a better standard of physique than those from which recruits are mainly drawn.

Certainly some routine duties in the Army are largely an anachronism. One example of this is to be found in guards and sentries. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when the civilian population was more lawless than it is today,

the police force as we know it non-existent, and officers and rank and file alike unpopular with the public, an armed guard was necessary to prevent damage to Army property, or even a riotous incursion into barracks. Officers, too, had to be protected from possible attacks by private soldiers, who were harshly treated, brutally punished, and badly paid and fed. It frequently happened in the eighteenth century that the men on guard were the only sober people in the evening in the whole barracks. None of those conditions obtain today, and, with their absence, the main reason for sentries and guard mounting disappears. There remains, of course, the consideration that such duties are in themselves a valuable training in smartness and discipline which build up soldierly qualities and character.

Undoubtedly, however, there are many army officers who think that, quite apart from the effect on recruiting, such duties are overdone. It is even suggested that training for tattoos and military tournaments turns the soldier into a sort of automaton, and diverts the attention of officers and men from the grim realities with which they will be confronted in war. It is urged that in the case of a small professional army such as ours the aim should be to turn each individual into an intelligent and skilled technician in the art of modern warfare. Anyone who saw the exercises of last summer, while admiring the spirit and endurance of all ranks, must admit that that desideratum is still far off. But I am wandering somewhat from the subject of recruiting.

I have left myself but little space to deal with recruiting for the Territorials. Here Mr. Duff Cooper, by his strenuous advocacy, has achieved a notable success. The percentage increase in enlistment is remarkable, but much remains to be done to increase the attraction and popularity of the Force. Some of the reforms can only be achieved gradually, some present serious administrative difficulties, incapable perhaps of being overcome. One of these latter is tax concessions both to Territorials themselves and to their employers, and discrimination in the giving of contracts by all government departments, civil and military, in favour of firms employing a given percentage of Territorials. More easy of attainment are further increases in pay and allowances; the rebuilding of obsolete drill halls,



and the provision of modern equipment in which some branches of the Territorial Army are sadly deficient.

Most important of all, perhaps, is the realization by members of Parliament, public bodies, and the rest of the population that the Territorial soldier is a man worthy of the utmost commendation and admiration. Just tributes are constantly paid to the excellence of the police and to the courtesy and good humour of bus conductors and other servants of the public. Too little is said about the self-sacrifice and high standard of conduct of the officers and men of the Territorial Force, who spend their scanty leisure in learning to defend their country from invasion.

In conclusion, I wish to disclaim, if such a disclaimer be necessary, any desire to hamper the Government and War Office by suggesting reforms which, however admirable, are incapable of achievement at the moment. I have already freely admitted the immediate difficulties which some present ; others, too, may be less easy than they appear to be. Nor do I wish to discourage recruiting under the conditions which prevail today. Men who are out of work or in casual and uncertain employment would be far better off morally and physically in the Army. The pity is that they don't realize it. I write rather in the spirit of the House of Commons debate on recruiting on December 9th. On that occasion there was a most heartening and almost unanimous desire evident in all parts of the House to help the Secretary for War by constructive criticism and suggestions how to get recruits. A very different spirit was displayed towards the subject from that which was apparent even a few months ago.

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## POLICY AND ENTERTAINMENT

BY IVOR BROWN

THE attitude of the State to popular entertainment in this country was for centuries one of detachment. It was none of its business to provide good entertainment, to assist the better against the worse, or to subsidize those forms of dramatic and musical art which private enterprise could not supply without severe losses. While all other European nations founded, encouraged, and sustained theatres and opera-houses, national and municipal, on the ground that the provision of good drama and music was as much the duty of the State as was the provision of universities, colleges, schools, libraries, and museums, Britain left these matters to chance or to private benevolence on the supposition that entertainment, even in its most cultural aspects, was the business of the individual. The actor had to fend for himself and the operatic singer depended on the philanthropic guarantors who made our Covent Garden seasons possible. The idea of a National Theatre has been constantly proposed by enthusiasts and consistently neglected by the public. Subsidies for music have occasionally been granted by urban councils, but, on the whole, the attitude of British officialism to entertainment has been one of rather less than benevolent aloofness. The Puritan distrust of the painted player in his motley has been deeply implanted in the national attitude to life. Men might have their pleasure : but the State must only guard such pleasure from viciousness : positive and constructive policy was not wanted.

But things are changing. Those who choose always to interpret policy in terms of economics will certainly observe that the British Government only became aware of popular entertainment and its problems when that entertainment had ceased to depend on small groups earning small sums and had become a vast industry serving millions of people and thinking in terms of

millions of pounds. G. K. Chesterton once remarked on the British genius for not noticing essential people : in his view we take our railwaymen and bus-drivers so much for granted that we only become aware of their existence when they go on strike and are not there. The British Government had long omitted to notice such people as actors : but it could hardly overlook the existence and importance of the film with its huge capitalization and its opportunity for making private fortunes. It really began to see the films when the films were not there to see—or at least the British films, which, in the middle of the last decade, were being extinguished by foreign competition.

By 1927 the American film industry—note that entertainment has now become one of the largest industries and is no longer merely an art or a craft—had so far outstripped British screen-production in quality and quantity that the State was forced to accept the cinema as a matter of Government concern and cause for a considered policy. A form of protection by quota followed. Film-renters had to take 20 per cent. of British-made films. The foreign companies countered this by producing, or having produced, in Britain short “quota-films” which were made cheaply and often carelessly. They were stopgap stuff, vamped up to comply with the letter of the law, and the fact that they were labelled British only did the name of Britain further damage. Fortunately British technique in film-construction began to improve and the arrival of “talkies,” which necessitated more indoor-work and less outdoor “shooting,” did much to counteract the climatic advantages of California. English actors were wanted for their accents and the British film industry gained rapidly in status and prosperity. But the State was still its protector.

After nearly ten years had passed, there was need for review of the situation. A Committee, appointed by the Board of Trade, has just sat under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne and has reported on the condition of the film industry and on the proper policy for its improvement. Because it is dealing with a highly complex industry the Report is necessarily technical and is not easy or attractive reading for the average patron of this form of entertainment. The complete industrialization of this form of supply of popular pleasure is implicit in every word of the Report,



which is not concerned with an art or with individuals, but in securing certain trade standards without damage to trade economics. Such a sentence as this about the quota-films shows how the conception of an art has been entirely subjected to financial considerations in the case of the cinema :

It was suggested to us that if a higher figure—such as, for example, £2 per foot of the film—were required to be spent on its production a reasonable minimum standard of quality would thereby be ensured ; and that the total of salaries, wages and payments in respect of the production of a film referred to in Section 27 (3) (iv) of the Act of 1927, which closely approximates, on the average, to 50 per cent. of the cost of the film, would have been a possible basis for administering such a cost test.

The Films are really being treated as so much lead-piping, the one being a conduit of popular pleasure and the other of waste fluids.

The Moyne Report advocates the retention and extension of the quota system and makes plans for abolishing the scandal of the cheap and trivial " quota-film." Even more important is the recommendation to create a Standing Commission " for the purpose of administering the provisions of new legislation arising from the Report." It would be " represented in the House of Commons by a Minister of the Crown or in some appropriate way." The Commission should have " powers of initiative and control." Moreover, it is further recommended that :

(1) The Government should keep a close watch on transfers of interests in British producing, renting and exhibiting units with a view to taking such steps as may be practicable to prevent control passing abroad.

(2) The Government should, as soon as may be, take such steps as may be practicable to encourage financial interests to constitute one or more organizations to finance British film production, in approved cases, on reasonable terms.

In other words the supply of visible and audible matter for public pleasure by the cinema trade has become so important financially and socially that the old policy of *laissez faire* in entertainment has completely vanished. The industry receives further protection by quota and is to have Government support, after due scrutiny, in raising capital. Foreign " interests " are to be watched lest the foreigner once more control this means of approach to British taste and opinion.

To note this change of policy with regard to public entertain-

ment is not to challenge it. We do not doubt the prudence of the Committee's advice, but it follows from this complete overthrow of free trade and *laissez faire* in one branch of entertainment that the people concerned may reasonably ask for a similar change of policy elsewhere. If the provision of distinctively British and decently competent films is a matter so important as to merit the attention of the British Government, are the arts of drama and music to be left to face all the economic blizzards that may blow without any cloak or covering of public provision? To suggest any sort of action on these lines would have seemed a heresy not long ago, but heresies often become orthodoxies more quickly than we expected. On December 1, at a meeting in the House of Commons, a committee of members was formed to watch the interests of music and drama, and to support a Bill which would constitute a Music and Drama Commission with power and funds to provide relief for the performers appearing in person before a living audience whose craft and livelihood have been threatened or destroyed by the superior wealth, palatial premises, and cheaper wares of mechanized entertainment.

At this meeting it was impressed on members by speakers of the highest authority, Lord Bessborough, Sir Hugh Allen, Dr. Malcolm Sargent, and others, that the plight of our orchestras was really desperate, while the supply of drama by the actor in person is either drying up altogether or is sadly hampered by financial stringency. The repertory companies, for example, in many provincial towns have to waste their time and efforts in collecting subscriptions or in finding guarantors of small sums to enable the continuance of work which is generally admitted to be a credit to the performers, a pleasure to the public, and an enrichment of local life.

There is in existence a body called the League of Audiences, which is sponsoring this Music and Drama Bill, the object of which is to institute a special Commission, rather similar in scope and status to the Forestry Commission. This would be empowered to grant aid to dramatic companies or to orchestras which could prove, to the satisfaction of expert assessors, the social and artistic value of their work and the necessity for some help to ensure its continuance. The amount to be disbursed

would have to be settled later on: a modest suggestion of £50,000 per annum has been made; this is not much, when one considers the size of the national bill for Education, not to mention Armaments. The source of this revenue will also have to be settled, but since the Entertainment Duty already brings in nearly ten million pounds a year the return of a two-hundredth part of this for the sustenance of the weaker brethren does not seem an unreasonable demand. Again there is the huge surplus taken by the State from the wireless licence fund, a fund earned by the artists, speakers, entertainers, and programme-builders of the B.B.C., but not returned to them in full. To propose that some of this should go to subsidize forms of art which can prove desert and poverty is surely not extravagant. Nor does it prove any feeling of jealousy or hostility to the B.B.C. It is merely urged that money earned by art and entertainment should be, in some fraction at least, devoted to sustaining worthy kinds of artistic performance.

At any rate the State is now fully involved, both by its vigilance on behalf of British films and by its relations with the B.B.C., in the finance and the nature of popular entertainment. It is no longer possible to dismiss the theatre and the concert-hall as purely private matters. The policy of Governmental isolation has been abandoned. Indeed there is now actually direct endowment in one direction. An organization called the British Council is receiving £15,000 a year, a trifling sum when one considers the size and the importance of its function, in order to impress other nations with the virtues and merits of British culture and British artistic achievement. Last autumn, for example, the British Council, working with the Foreign Office and some generous private hosts, brought to England and entertained the music critics of many nations, arranging that they should hear in the course of a few, perhaps too crowded, days the best of British music and see the best of British ballet as well as meeting British people with musical and cultural interests. The object of this was to counteract the far too common notion that British music is only derivative in style and second-rate in execution. I believe that the results obtained, as far as the favourable judgment of esteemed foreign critics went, were most satisfactory. The visit was a great success.



In the dictatorship and totalitarian States leisure, like labour, is inevitably organized. The German and Italian Governments both construct elaborate plans for the best use of the workers' hours of ease, including arrangements for dramatic and musical performances. Our democracy, with its far greater appreciation of the individual's need and duty to find his own entertainment instead of being spoon-fed by authority, will naturally not want anything so thorough (or so embarrassingly named) as the German "Strength Through Joy" Campaign. Nor do we want propaganda in art. But, as has already been explained, the old policy of detachment has collapsed in this country and, at the same time, the general decrease in hours of labour is turning the problem of public leisure into a matter for public vigilance and public action. Many great industrial concerns have now agreed to a five-day week and more are likely to follow this example. The long week-end may soon cease to be the perquisite of stockbrokers and be widely enjoyed by those who earn the dividends as well as by those who draw them. This means that the millions have to find more amusement and develop more hobbies or side-line occupations. We are distrustful of increasing our Civil Service, and proposals for a Ministry of Arts or a Ministry of Leisure would in all probability be very ill-accepted by the electorate and certainly would receive "a bad Press."

The present technique of securing some public control and ordered planning without surrender to the Whitehall species of bureaucracy is the creation of boards, commissions, and corporations which enjoy freedom to develop their own methods and are only loosely attached to the ordinary machinery of State. The Moyne Report follows this model in its proposals for a Standing Commission to watch British films, "its constant aim being the creation of a healthy, expanding industry to the benefit alike of the Empire, the nation, the public who see the films, and all the commercial interests concerned." Note also the complete departure from *laissez faire* principles implicit in the following paragraph :

Once the Commission has become well established with the right personnel and has earned the confidence of the various sections of the industry, there might be other functions which sooner or later it could appropriately be asked

to discharge. These might involve, for example, such questions as the redundancy of cinema houses, combinations in one section of the trade and counter-combinations in another, quicker turnover of capital and the furnishing of information required by the local licensing authorities in the exercise of their powers of control. These last are closely allied to some of the problems of distribution, with which the Commission will be dealing.

The Commission's costs are to come from the trade itself. "To defray the expenses of the Commission and its staff, we contemplate that the fees received from renters' and exhibitors' licences and from registration of films will prove a nucleus."

The Government has already granted the film trade special legislation and there is little doubt that this Standing Commission will be duly set up to implement it. The arts of drama and of music, whose need is often desperate, can no longer be logically neglected. In the days of general *laissez faire* with regard to entertainment it was reasonable to tell the author and composer, the actor and the musician that their fate lay in their own hands. But now that the British film industry has become a matter of public policy, now that the case for sustaining and spreading the repute of British art and British artists has been permitted by the foundation and financing of the British Council, it is impossible for the Government with justice to wash its hands of the other arts.

One point made in favour of the Music and Drama Bill, a point especially emphasized by Dr. Malcolm Sargent in his speech in Committee Room 10 on December 1, was the smallness of the sums needed to turn the financial balance for an important orchestra, and the same would be urged by any leader of a dramatic company who is still heroically carrying the burden of touring Shakespeare and other work of quality, without subsidy, in places where classic drama would never penetrate without the visits of his team. These efforts do not involve large losses, but there is (or may be) a constant series of small losses because the public catered for simply cannot pay London prices for their seats. Charity and enthusiasm may meet these petty losses for a while. But why should they?

## LONDON—ONE-FIFTH OF THE NATION

BY G. D. H. COLE

MORE than two hundred years have passed since Daniel Defoe, in his *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, expressed his amazement and admiration at the prodigious growth of building around London, and at the extraordinary increase of houses and people within London itself. In Defoe's eyes, these things were very good. He rejoiced to see the houses of prosperous merchants perching themselves on every vantage-point of high land around the metropolis ; and as he wandered about England on his equivocal missions for Harley, reporting on the state of opinion and organizing everywhere a series of correspondents who would keep him, and through him the Government, regularly informed, never wearied of recording how much London's greatness contributed to the prosperity of the rest of the country. In eighteenth-century England all roads, by land or by water, seemed to lead to London ; and nearly all trade seemed to be an exchange between London and the provinces, to the advantage of both.

London was, in Defoe's day, the only town in England that could be reckoned great by modern standards. Bristol and Norwich, the two next largest places, had in the 1720's probably no more than 30,000 inhabitants ; and most towns were no bigger than many villages are today. No wonder London seemed to Defoe and his contemporaries a prodigious place, overshadowing the whole country with the multitude and wealth of its consuming public.

And yet, by modern standards, how small a place Defoe's London was ! Half a century before, at the time of the Great Plague, Greater London had about half a million inhabitants. After the Plague and the Fire, the number fell by perhaps a fifth. Then it increased again very fast. Defoe, in 1724, asserted that London and its environs had a population of a million and a half. This, however, like most of Defoe's



estimates, was obviously wild exaggeration ; for when the first Census was officially taken in 1801, Greater London—taken as including the area now administered by the London County Council—had still under a million people. For this same area, still fully adequate to include all veritable London, Defoe's figure was not reached until about 1826 ; and the two million mark was not passed until the early 'forties. Three millions were reached in the middle 'sixties, and four millions in the middle 'eighties. But the four and a half millions of the 1901 Census proved to be the summit of growth within the L.C.C. area. Since then, London's population, within this area, has actually fallen away.

At the time of the Plague and the Fire, roughly one citizen out of every eleven in England and Wales could be called a Londoner. In Defoe's day the proportion may have been one in ten. At the date of the first Census it was one in nine. London had been gaining in relative population, but not at a very rapid rate. But in the nineteenth century the relative rate of increase became much greater. By 1880 Greater London could claim one citizen out of every six. Today it can claim one out of every five.

These proportions are not, of course, for the same areas at different dates. They represent the population of a Greater London which has been continuously spreading out over a larger area. The area which seemed generously adequate in 1855, and perhaps barely adequate in 1888, when London at last acquired, within the frontiers fixed in 1855, a unifying authority with reasonably sufficient powers, has since become quite ludicrously too small. Fully half the people of London live today outside the area administered by the London County Council ; and before long the number of outer inhabitants will be greatly in excess of the number of Londoners in the narrower sense. In terms of extent of territory, the disparity is naturally greater still ; for the outlying suburbs are far less densely populated than the districts in the inner ring. In these days, a growing population takes much more room than it used to take. Houses are built less thick on the ground ; and much more land is given to gardens and open spaces, public or private—though still, especially in the poorer areas, not nearly enough. Moreover,

nowadays families are smaller, so that for a given population houses are more numerous as well as farther apart.

Thus it comes about that the area assigned to the London County Council forms today only a small part of Greater London. Still more startling is the contrast if we compare even the L.C.C. area with the Greater London which Defoe thought so vast and marvellous. London County includes, in addition to the City, the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs created in 1899 out of the earlier confusion of parishes and district boards which sent representatives to the Metropolitan Board of Works. Of these boroughs only two—Holborn and Southwark—fall wholly within the area which Defoe marked out as constituting the Greater London of his day. And no less than eighteen of the present boroughs of inner London—quite apart from the numerous boroughs and urban districts of the outer ring—fall entirely outside the area of the great metropolis as Defoe described it in his *Tour*. Yet Defoe, with his abounding enthusiasm for London's greatness, was certainly far more disposed to exaggerate than to minimize its extent.

Not till the nineteenth century did the area of continuous building spread out far beyond the limits of Defoe's London. I have before me Cary's map of London as it was in 1822—nearly a century after Defoe's survey. The changes in the built-up area are far smaller than the rise in population would suggest. Indeed, the continuous built-up area was still relatively small. Independent towns and villages such as Islington, Hackney, and Stoke Newington to the north, and Peckham, Battersea, and Clapham to the south, had come into much closer contact with London without being actually engulfed. So had Woolwich in the east, and Kensington and Hammersmith in the west. The Greater London of 1855 was already being foreshadowed; but it was not yet in being. The railway age, which was soon to suburbanize a host of towns and villages beyond the built-up area, had not yet begun. London's first steam railway was not opened until 1833. The network of suburban lines was mostly built in the 'fifties.

Indeed, at many points the solid growth of the London area was made possible only by the draining of the marsh lands, especially to the east, where even today low-lying areas along the

courses of the Thames and the Lea still account for considerable open spaces within the circuit of the built-up area. The story of London's expansion until well on into the nineteenth century is bound up with the drainage of low-lying lands. As rivers were canalized, or even put in pipes and lost to sight, as marshes were drained and filled up with all manner of rubbish, Londoners populated the spaces where building had been out of the question at an earlier date. East London, as we know it, has been erected largely on the low lands along the valleys of the Thames and the Lea.

To the north and the south Nature offered less obstacles to expansion ; but here, too, contours are important. In all these areas the higher lands were usually filled up first, as residential suburbs for the well-to-do. The lower lands were developed later for cheaper houses and for poorer folk. To the west population was able to pour out more evenly than in other directions, along the relatively flat clay of Middlesex. But even in this region expansion usually came earliest on such rising ground as there was. In greater London, except in the centre, it is broadly true that the rich, or the well-to-do, live on higher ground than the poor.

There are, of course, many reasons for the hugeness of London. London is the capital city of a great country, which is itself the capital of the world's greatest empire. It is the world's financial centre, with a far greater accumulation of experience than any other city in the handling of large and delicate financial transactions. It is the only great capital city in Europe which is also a first-class port, so that foreign commerce, as well as government and high finance, finds in it a natural home. It is well placed for contact with the Continent of Europe, so that it became at an early date the clearing house for tourists as well as for commercial traffic. Many causes have come together to make London great ; and the greater it becomes the more compelling is its attractive power. Great populations mean great markets for the wares of culture and commerce alike. The more people come to live, and industries to settle, in London, the stronger are the reasons why more should follow. Nor are there, now that the marshes in the vicinity have been mostly drained, any natural obstacles to further expansion. Physically,



London can be stretched out continuously to Brighton, or Oxford, or Colchester without encountering worse hindrances than have been overcome in the course of its earlier growth.

Is this proliferation of the metropolis good or bad—first, from the standpoint of the Londoner and, secondly, from that of the country as a whole? From certain points of view it is definitely bad. It increases the vulnerability of Great Britain to attack from the air; for a stampede of the vast London population into the surrounding country would obviously dislocate the entire system of food supply and public administration. It aggravates the problem of the depressed areas; and, moreover, the bigger it grows, the more evident become the disadvantages of its growing without any sort of comprehensive plan. It is costing millions to establish any sort of green belt of open land around Greater London, and even so the belt is bound to be broken by many stretches of built-up land. This could have been avoided if at an earlier stage London had possessed any sort of unified governing authority with power to plan its development on rational lines. But no such Greater London authority has existed in the past; and unhappily none exists even today.

The disputation about the advantages and disadvantages of London's hugeness is almost as old as the history of the place. For centuries before William Cobbett railed at London as "The Wen," one generation of Englishmen after another had been marvelling at its prodigious size. Foreigners, too, and half-foreigners from North Britain, have often been eloquent in praise of London's greatness—from William Dunbar's "London, thou art of townè *A per se*," to the latest star of Baedeker. But there have been many voices uplifted on the other side. Queen Elizabeth issued several proclamations designed to check the growth of building in London: Shelley capped Dunbar by proclaiming that "Hell is a city much like London;" and Cobbett regarded the growth of "The Wen" as the cause and accompaniment of the decay of the English country. No one who lives in or near London, whether he praises or blames its hugeness, can help observing with wonder this apparently limitless capacity of the great city for taking all things unto itself—a capacity that seems in our day to be unaffected, if not positively stimulated, by economic depression elsewhere.

It is, indeed, not difficult to see why London is able to grow so fast today. The face of England is changing, economically, almost as fast just now as it changed in the days of the Industrial Revolution, when factories and coal mines and iron works were piling up population in the new industrial areas of the north. But now the current is setting the other way. Finished commodities are made with a smaller expenditure of raw material ; and the semi-manufactures used in their making take far less fuel to produce. Labour is shifting out of the extractive and primary producing industries into the lighter finishing trades which, untied to any particular locality by natural causes, are mostly free to settle where they will. As productivity increases and standards of living rise, fewer workers come to be employed in making things, and more in carrying them about, handling them in warehouses and shops, or making book-entries about them in ledgers. More people again come to be employed in rendering direct services to the consumers—in the entertainment and catering industries for example—or in manning the public utility services, from gas, water, and electricity to road-making and the erection of public buildings. Maintenance work in garages, in house repair, and in a host of minor services grows apace. The public departments, national and local, assume new functions, and therewith take on a larger number of employees. Finally, the professions wax in numbers ; and more and more hitherto unorganized callings acquire a recognized professional status.

All these changes in the character of employment minister to the growth of London. Both the official Census and the recent *New Survey of London Life and Labour* bring out very plainly the special qualities of London's economic life. In the area covered by the *Survey*, the figures showing the numbers engaged in different occupations are very revealing. Domestic service heads the list, with 418,000 employees. Then comes transport, with 316,000, followed by the food and catering trades, with 272,000, the dress trades with 264,000, and commercial occupations with 227,000.

So far the list does not include a single major "industry" in the ordinary sense given to the word. Next, however, comes building (165,000) ; and then follow in order professional

occupations (153,000), metal and machinery trades (150,000), printing and paper trades (102,000), government services (86,000), wood and furniture trades (83,000), and textile trades (72,000).

Thus, among productive industries in the narrower sense, excluding the food and dress trades, building comes easily first, followed by the metal and engineering group and by printing and paper. Domestic service, the food and catering trades, and the clothing trades occupy a far larger proportion of the working population than in any other region ; and the same is true of transport and of commerce, including distribution. London's professional population is also quite abnormally high. If the persons engaged in domestic service be added to the " non-manual " group the numbers of the combined population of " black-coated " workers rise to nearly half the whole.

It is not easy to compare these conditions with those of earlier periods. The Census gives occupational figures from 1851, but not on a comparable basis. It can only be stated broadly that in recent times the numbers engaged in domestic service have grown the least, and the numbers engaged in manufactures have also increased far more slowly than those in transport, commerce, and finance, and the professional and public services.

As a manufacturing centre, London is concerned mainly with the consumers' trades. There is nothing new in this. Although the predominant trades have changed, it was as true in the eighteenth century as it is today. In 1750, or thereabouts, London's principal occupations included watch-making, silk-weaving and bootmaking—all for the most part lost since then. Shipbuilding, which was the principal London industry not catering directly for the consumer, has also gone, the last London shipyard having disappeared well within living memory. As the nineteenth century advanced, and some of London's older staple trades began to melt away, new consumers' trades grew up apace round the docks in the East End. Furniture-making, match-making, jam-making and many other food trades developed fast ; printing expanded with the growth of newspapers and commercial advertising ; and the light metal trades became rapidly more important with the advent of telephones, gramophones and, in our own day, electrical apparatus and wireless.



Assembling works, especially for motor-cars, grew numerous in the twentieth century ; and many producing industries established big depots, as well as offices, in the metropolitan area. London's manufacturing activity increased again. It has been increasing faster than ever during the past few years.

London's attractive power, as the focus of a great local market, as the capital of a world-wide empire, and as the principal money-centre of the world, has given it throughout the modern period an immense power to draw to itself all manner of economic activities that are not tied by natural conditions to a particular region. This power was enough to prevent it from falling in relative population even during the period when industry, based on coal and iron, was making its most rapid advances in the North and in the industrial areas of the Clyde and South Wales. And this power is even more formidable today.

Surely so great and rapidly growing a centre of economic and social life needs to be planned and governed as a whole. Yet never in its history, at any rate since the Middle Ages, has London possessed a common government. In 1855, the year of the Metropolis Management Act, *The Times* could even maintain that London did not in truth exist.

We may really say that there is no such place as London at all, the huge city passing under this title being rent into an infinity of divisions, districts, and areas. . . . Within the metropolitan limits the local administration is carried on by no less than 300 different bodies, deriving powers from about 250 different Local Acts, independent of general Acts. The number of Commissioners employed, though not precisely ascertainable, Sir Benjamin Hall estimated by his own computation at about 15,000.

In the sense given to the words by *The Times* in 1855, London still has no existence. The number of separate administrative bodies responsible for the government of the inner metropolitan area has indeed been greatly reduced ; and there has been considerable co-ordination of certain essential services. But London proper—and still more Greater London—is still administered by a host of separate bodies, under no common system or form of unifying control.

In 1855, when the Metropolitan Board of Works was set up for the purpose of consolidating London's sanitary administration, the area allocated to it could be regarded as at any rate roughly co-terminous with Greater London. Thirty-three years

later, when Parliament decided to establish the London County Council, the metropolis had already sprawled very much further afield ; but the boundaries of 1855 were retained as they were. They remain the same today—for every year has made their extension more difficult. For most administrative purposes, London today is still the London of 1855. Yet in that year Greater London had only about two and a half million inhabitants, whereas today it has between eight and nine millions living in what is essentially a continuous urban area.

London, then, has never had a government. When at length, in 1888, Parliament took the oft-considered step of setting up a London County Council elected directly by the ratepayers, it had already escaped far beyond the boundaries of 1855, so that the new body set to work under an immense handicap. London—that is, Greater London—was beyond the grasp of the new L.C.C., which had to watch the metropolitan population spreading fast over suburban areas wholly beyond its co-ordinating control.

This is London's tragedy—never to have had a government, and to seem farther now than ever from acquiring one. For it gets harder every year to rectify the old mistakes. Only a few years ago the Royal Commission on London Government practically abandoned its task in despair. For far more now than in 1888 will any attempt to include the sprawling suburbs within London's government be fought by bitter and determined opponents. The county boroughs and many of the municipal boroughs of Greater London will fight hard to maintain their independence ; for many of them have lower rates than they could hope for if they were within the L.C.C. area, and to some extent their citizens enjoy London's common services without paying for them. Still more energetically will the County Councils of Middlesex, Surrey, Essex, Kent, and Hertfordshire resist any attempt to transfer to the L.C.C. a large part of their present populations and a still larger proportion of their rateable values.

London, then, has grown up without a plan, for it has been without any authority capable of making one. Since Wren and Evelyn drew up their comprehensive plans for the re-building of London on the morrow of the Great Fire of 1666, no one, I think, has been venturesome enough to make even on paper a

plan for the re-development of London as a whole. After the Fire, Wren's and Evelyn's plans were quickly discarded in face of the objections of property owners to being told what they were to do with their land. Vested interests were strong enough to veto planning on any adequate scale.

But, it may be asked, will London continue to grow? We are told nowadays that before long the population of England and Wales will begin to fall fast, and that within a generation or so the fall is likely to become catastrophic. About that I do not profess to know; for in the long run population has a way of playing at "Cheat the Prophet." But in the fairly near future some fall there is certain to be. How will this affect London's growth?

Less, I think, than might be imagined at first sight. For there is still abundant room for our housing standards to improve, even if the population grows less. We shall continue, I hope, to empty the overcrowded areas in the centre, and to spread the people out more thinly in better and pleasanter surroundings. Moreover, unless war comes to devastate the city, London will continue, under modern economic conditions, to exert its compelling power and, in default of major economic changes, to gather people unto itself. If existing trends continue, before long one citizen in four, instead of one in five, is likely to be a Londoner.

Therefore the need for planning exists now more than ever. And planning needs to be economic, and not simply social. We need to plan industry as well as houses and open spaces; and accordingly we need, now more than ever, a common government for all London—not to supersede the lesser authorities but to complement and co-ordinate their work. But are we likely to get such an authority for Greater London—a regional as distinct from a merely local, governing body? Not, I fear till the notion of London as a city has sunk far deeper into the minds of the citizens than it has today; and not, I fear, till we set seriously to work to plan, not merely London, but the ordered development of all Great Britain.



## A MUZZLE ON CRITICS

BY V. S. PRITCHETT

PROPAGANDA is the natural means of communication for an age of faith, whose chief requirement is some sort of transcendental simplification. "Death to Fascism," "Down with the Yids," or the more homely "Beer is Best" are examples of this simplifying instinct at work—simplifying, of course, in order to conceal a confusion of issues. For a nostrum can only be made to appear as the one rescuing and guiding light in the darkness, if the darkness is first made dark enough. Hence confusion of mind is an absolute necessity to the born propagandist; his own confusion is his best friend; and those who have laughed at the latest muddle of words which have poured out of Dr. Goebbels in Berlin are in danger of under-rating his success and its causes.

The case of Dr. Goebbels is an interesting one. From obscurity he has risen to be the chief gargoyle on the strange Nordic façade, as shrill as the *Skibbereen Eagle*, and as frantic as the Editor of the *Eatanswill Gazette*. Obscure in the days when all men of talent in Germany had freedom to rise, Dr. Goebbels rose when freedom vanished, and the great Germans of his day were sent into exile. He became a cultural dictator after the cultured had departed. In the first years of Nazi reaction, his attention was mainly given to matters of political ideology, to matters of blood, Valhalla, and Bolshevism; and he assumed—as it happened, too lightly—that those writers and artists who had not been able to get out of Germany would automatically become imbued with the inspirations he gave them over the microphone. Lately he discovered he had been too optimistic.

The speech—for it was obviously the occasion for a speech—has become mildly notorious. The root of the evil, he discovered, was in criticism. There must be no more criticism of works of art in Germany. It was intolerable in a country where no one

was free that the critics should retain their freedom. Artists must no longer be victimized. Happy artists and writers of Germany! No longer will the German Keats be a martyr to reviewers, no longer can X. say that Y. has written a bad book or acted atrociously in a play. That world of vituperation has gone. There is only one vituperator and He shall be nameless. And happier, happier publishers! Criticism must become what all the lovers of publicity have long wished it to be: an extract from the publisher's catalogue or those aphoristic comments which fill the advertising columns of our Sunday papers. Who can fail to respond to such an affluent proposal?

Well, quite a number of people can fail no doubt. It strikes one that Dr. Goebbels, so long engaged in politics and business, where men are openly actuated by self-interest, has overlooked the nature of writers and artists. They are ungrateful and cantankerous people. It is easy enough to drive a team of politicians or the ordinary run of citizens; a judicious distribution of the oats of self-interest is enough. But self-interest means very little to the artist, who is indeed happiest when going against his own interests and those of others. Self-preservation is what really governs him. Nothing is more congenial or necessary to him than to rend his own tribe. One has only to bring two painters, two poets, two musicians or two actors together to see that this is not the material the docile totalitarian is made of, not Nordic man but a gathering of wolves.

This is all very regrettable when one looks at the nobler course that Dr. Goebbels would have them pursue: "In a time such as ours which demands the utmost energy, endurance, and nerve, it is the special mission of the artist tirelessly to communicate to the nation strength through joy."

But, one asks, will artists and writers have the sense to stop muddling along with what they call serious work even after this appeal? Alas, they seem to prefer their muddle, and Dr. Goebbels has had to dig deep for the explanation. Art, he discovered, is steeped in the criticism of "the liberalistic-Jewish period." Criticism has fallen into the hands of a secret conspiracy of "the hidden successors of this Jewish autocracy." For it would seem that in Germany, as notoriously in England, the critics of a paper are frequently in the opposite camp to

their political Editors ; the Left wing weekly has a Tory literary critic, the Tory paper is undermined by the latest æsthetic insinuations from Moscow, and nothing so delights these writers as slyly to sabotage—I think that must be the word—the political policies of their papers. Moreover, says the Doctor, no one has a right to criticize a work of art unless he can do better himself. Description of a work is permissible, but not criticism. And no one—though he rather mysteriously quotes with zest an episode in Berlin when some young men of twenty-two “drew swords against accomplished artists” of twice their age—under thirty must be allowed to undertake the heavy responsibility of this descriptive work. “For the rest,” Dr. Goebbels said, “art had suffered no loss by the disappearance of the critic. False greatness would die a natural death.” The Nordic world, strong in its joy, secure in the new culture, would live by the good old nineteenth century law of the survival of the fittest.

Dr. Goebbels is not the first to damn the critics. All the great critics have done this many times. Coleridge—though now abolished—had a low opinion of them. Coleridge was certainly an artist who had had a great measure of success ; but the general run of critics, it must be admitted, fall into the category of artists who have failed. He who cannot do, teaches.? Sainte-Beuve, for example, would have been dismissed by Dr. Goebbels, because of his poor verse. Dr. Johnson’s views on the poets would have been banned because of the mediocrity of his poems. Hazlitt would not have been allowed to write on painting because he had been obliged to throw up painting in despair, Ruskin would have gone the same way. Indeed, it is obvious that if one is to accept the rule that there must be no criticism unless you can do better yourself, then the great critics would have been condemned to a consideration of the mediocre only or at any rate of what is beneath them. One had not expected from the subtle Doctor such a candid admission of the mediocrity of the art of the Fascist states.

To be just to him it must be pointed out, however, that these were not really his own views. He has borrowed them from Russia, whence so much of Nazi Germany has been borrowed. The Doctor observed that in order to set free one class you had to put another in chains, and copied the Marxist procedure.



A Marxist art in a Marxist state, a Nazi art in a Nazi state, and criticism to match. To quote the old Spanish lines :

Free thought I loudly proclaim to all  
And death to him who does not think as I do.

The dilemma of Dr. Goebbels would have a merely picturesque interest if it were not also the dilemma of Western Europe. Faced by the disappearance of serious art in his own country, he abolishes the critic, but it would be useless to deny that the disappearance of art is threatened through Western Europe. By this I mean we are likely to lose, indeed for all important purposes we have already lost, the art that belongs to the great literary tradition of the nineteenth century. What remains is chiefly the ever-rarifying atmosphere of its criticism.

Released by the French Revolution and emerging after its initial crudities and political quarrels into the full confidence of the romantic movement, liberal culture became in the years before the war very largely detached from politics, isolated from the broader concerns of society and retired into a world of private sensibility. In English letters, it is the contrast between H. G. Wells, for example, and Virginia Woolf. The rehabilitation of the eighteenth century was its crowning act, a final amends to the century from which indignantly it had in its youth reacted. The fact is, the liberal movement had completed its circle and it had returned to its parent. Now, where this revival still survives, all is urbanity, tolerance and disinterestedness. But as there was a dash of Wesley and Blake in the eighteenth century, so the neo-eighteenth has its Lawrence.

Those who still live in the happy backwaters of the Liberal movement speak of protecting liberty, but rather less of sharing it ; that has an ugly political sound. Like the new rich, they wish to forget their immediate origins and adopt a tradition they had in more boisterous times despised. Put them back into the bitter, political quarrel about the Lake-poets, set them to read the venomous quarrels in Hazlitt and Coleridge, remind them of the charges and counter-charges of the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* and of how the French Revolution divided Europe into two camps as clearly as Communism does to-day, and they treat it all as picturesque or academic. The manners of the eighteenth century were better, they say ; there were standards,

there was elegance, eccentricity did not become inflated into a humourless conviction of Godhead, formality had not become dogma overblown, the epigram had not degenerated into the slogan, simplicity had not been confused with the untutored, and man had not become the mob. Moreover—and this is a strong point—eighteenth century views were limited, conventional and tolerant. Liberalism, which is the only tolerant force in the world of new and intolerant ideas, turns with nostalgia and apology to the world it overthrew more than a century ago.

In English letters, this nostalgia for an elegant and circumscribed world was typically represented by Lytton Strachey. In him the Liberal mind had reached an aristocratic phase and hence the insistence on the exclusive value of private sensibility, the pleasures of eccentricity. The school of writers who succeeded Wells and Shaw were all eccentric in their method. The aristocratic "Do what you will" could be written on their title pages, whether they exalted the eccentricity of consciousness to the fabulous level of *Ulysses* or like Mr. E. M. Forster were exposing the clash of the English sensibility with an alien one.

How difficult it is going to be for Dr. Goebbels to continue literary discussions in simplified political and moral terms is clear the moment one begins it. The individualism of the artist is so various that you can make almost any case from any writer, if you have fallen into propagandist habits. A party theory could be made out of the works of P. G. Wodehouse or Dorothy Sayers, without ever pointing out that the first was not a political but a humorous writer and the second a writer of detective stories. A writer much misrepresented by these people is D. H. Lawrence, probably because his work contains most of the main and conflicting tendencies of his period. There are plausible reasons for arguing that Lawrence with his blood mysticism, his stress on the instinctive, his dislike of the mind, his exaltation of the primitive and his hatred of the international world, was a Fascist prophet. In Germany, he is indeed so regarded. On the other hand, there was in him more than a touch of that neo-Liberal belief in the rights of the private sensibility. As he grew older, he tended to write less of his own class—the miners of Nottingham—and more about the kind of people, artists and writers and their hangers on, who were in, say, the Lytton Strachey circle.

He wrote sometimes satirically, often enviously or admiringly, of the Liberal aristocrats who were scattered in the pleasant places of the pre-slump world. Again, there is another Lawrence ready to the party hand; ultimately he rejected the Liberal world. He was a working class writer, writing his best work about the working classes; and in his critical work—I am thinking particularly of the studies in American literature—he is most refreshing, because the traditions of Liberal criticism are simply not in him. It is not surprising that after the game-keeper went off with Lady Chatterley, Lawrence was claimed by the anti-Fascists and that Dr. Goebbels should be fighting with them for his body.

Lawrence was mistrusted by the Liberals because of his fanatical religious temper. It is this fanaticism which attracts the younger generation to him. The young have discovered belief, and belief creates its own liberty by depriving others of theirs. One expects no tolerance from new religions. Vision may be wild, but it cannot compromise. Neither a Fascist nor a Marxist can entertain doubt any more than a mystic can. The packed trial, censorship, suppression, distrust of the independent mind, are inevitable. An age of faith is an age of cruelty. The history of Spain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries provides the most striking historical parallel to what is going on in Germany to-day.

It is as well to remember that as Mr. Aldous Huxley has been saying in his articles on propaganda, successful propaganda is less the result of the appeal of the propagandised idea than of favourable circumstances. And circumstances are at the moment very favourable to the political schools of art and criticism. Dr. Goebbels has been produced by the moment. What are these circumstances? The question may be answered in many ways. You can say we are on the see-saw of fashion, that passionate concern for society succeeds inevitably to polite indifference to it; that we are still suffering from the chaos of values caused by the Great War; that we are pulled one way by the Russian Revolution and the other by the Fascists, just as Europe was divided at the time of the Council of Trent; and so on. But behind these upheavals, a new class has become vocal in the West. If there is a clash of classes it is because a



new class has arisen, and in art, that means new manners, new subjects and new styles. The modern English novel when it appeared in the time of Defoe was the product of just such another class emancipation and its accompanying political changes.

What is this emergent class? In Spain and Russia it has obviously been the working class. In the other Western countries, the working class movement has had great setbacks. The struggle has not indeed been directly between the rich and the poor, but between the poor and the slightly richer. It may be simple in Italy and Germany to make these rigid divisions, but in England, the most class-ridden country in the world, and in consequence, a country which has had to learn how to relieve the importunities of these barriers, the attempt to impose the class argument has always something slightly absurd or exaggerated about it. Circumstances have not greatly favoured the propagandist or prophet and the Communist or Fascist simplifications have had little chance with us.

## WARTIME FOOD SUPPLIES

By DR. CLOUDESLEY BRERETON

THE history of the Government's policy for laying in an adequate supply of food in time of war has been a sorry record of dilatoriness and procrastination. While they have taken the most energetic steps to strengthen our Army, Navy and especially our Air Force, they have literally done nothing of a practical nature to increase our reserves of food supplies, with the possible exception of a conference with the canning industry, and that was apparently only a preliminary investigation of the potential expansion of the industry.

Actually the Government have been very late in taking up the question at all, though the re-armament programme has long been in full swing. During the three days debate on defence the only allusion to it was a casual remark by a Minister who in winding up the debate used the familiar formula that the matter would not be lost sight of. As late as April 2 Mr. Baldwin said: "I do not think the appointment of a national committee is necessary." But happily he soon altered his mind, and on April 22 announced the appointment of a special committee. This surprising *volte-face* was due no doubt to the persistent pressure of a small group of young Conservatives in the House (Mr. Patrick Donner, Mr. Duncan Sandys, Mr. Cartland and others). This committee, which was under the chairmanship of Sir William Beveridge, and has now finished its deliberations, apparently dealt with little more than the problems of rationing. A sub-committee of the Committee for the Co-ordination of National Defence was assigned the threefold task of surveying the food problems under three heads: (1) Storage of all kinds of food for use in emergency, (2) expansion of the production of food at home, (3) protection of food supplies from overseas. When, however, efforts were made before the rising of Parliament in the summer to discover what steps had been taken to

secure the expansion of home production, Sir Thomas Inskip replied that he had nothing further to say on the matter.

No wonder a widespread feeling of uneasiness arose which found expression at the Annual Conference of the Conservative Party. Early in the present session a few vague statements made by Mr. Baldwin and Sir T. Inskip merely paid lip-service to the matter, but on November 24 an important deputation, headed by Sir Austen Chamberlain and consisting of Mr. Churchill, Lord Salisbury, Lord Trenchard and others urged on the Prime Minister the establishment of a national stock of food sufficient to last for several months. The only reaction of the Government to this weighty appeal was the subsequent announcement of yet another committee—this time under the Board of Trade. A Food (Defence Plan) Department was to be set up to work in co-operation with the Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence to “continue and complete” the formation of plans for the supply, control, and distribution, of food and feeding stuffs for defence purposes. But this department will not be directly concerned with home production. That will be a matter for the Ministry of Agriculture. The only other thing known is that the problem of food storage in time of war is being investigated by Sir Ernest Gower, with no doubt yet another “shadow” committee to help him. One hopes that one has correctly pieced together this jig-saw puzzle of apparently overlapping and interlocking committees, in spite of the meagre information that has been vouchsafed about them.

But the broad fact remains that though the Government have had nearly a year to work on the problem, they have so far produced nothing except committees. It certainly surpasses the wit of the ordinary man to understand why they should not long ago have put into operation a substantial part of this elaborate programme, unless the reason be “the present system of unorganized and unco-ordinated departmentalism,” of which the President of the Building Industries National Council has so bitterly complained. The Army, Navy, and Air Force, have not put off getting to work till all their numerous problems were settled. Let us hope that by the time this article is in print the Government will have implemented some of their paper schemes, for it is difficult to exaggerate the urgency of the



matter, in view of the present state of Europe, which is daily getting worse. If a war breaks out in which we are involved, it will come like a thief in the night, and it is useless to be armed to the teeth if we have a half-empty larder.

Compared with 1914, our food position is undoubtedly worse. We have 4,000,000 more mouths to feed, and 4,000,000 acres less under the plough. As the *Record* of the National Farmers' Union has lately pointed out, except in the year 1935 the decrease in acreage since 1932 has been continuous. As regards manpower, 120,000 workers have left the land since 1921, and if we consider that other great reservoir of food supplies, the sea, we find that owing to the Government's failure to protect our fishermen, their number has fallen since 1912 by 12,000, or roughly 37 per cent. Yet we may well in the next war be in the position of a beleaguered fortress. Not that we are likely, if the Government continue to press forward their naval preparations, to lose command of the sea, but in any case the transit of adequate food supplies to this country will be far more difficult. The submarine of today, with its extended radius of action, will be much more dangerous, but the chief danger of all will be the aeroplane which, according to Lord Trenchard, has a range of 750 miles, and carries high explosive bombs to which those used in the last war were mere pellets.

What is going to protect our unarmed, or at least unarmoured, merchantmen on the high seas and in the Mediterranean from sudden raids by aerial Emdens? Certainly not our cruisers, who number little more than a third of those we had in 1914 (70). Even with that number at their command the Government were totally unable to bring over the wheat they had bought in Australia, which was left rotting on the quays of Adelaide. Besides, our merchant service will have a double task, the conveyance of oil as well as food—a matter on which Lord Strabolgi has already written an article in *THE FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW*. Again, a good deal of cargo of all sorts was brought during the last war to this country in foreign bottoms. Yet, as Mr. Watts of the Shipping Federation has observed, we may not be able to get any timber in wartime from the Baltic if neutrals fight shy of bringing it, as they may well do. In the last war they actually brought 95 per cent. of our supplies. What is still

more disquieting is that the total tonnage of our mercantile marine has decreased by nearly 2,000,000 tons since 1914, and, as the ships are larger and fewer, the loss of a single ship will be more serious than in 1914. The numbers of British seamen in our polyglot merchant service has fallen from 178,000 to 100,259. How serious this is for the Navy may be seen from the fact that while its personnel is 103,000 men, it has only a reserve of skilled seamen (including fishermen) of about 135,000 men to draw from, and, according to Admiral Mark Kerr, it takes four years to train one who has not already followed the sea, and six years at least to make a seaman gunner.

The question is not a political or party one. Sir Arthur Salter, who is a free trader, has urged in *The Times* careful investigation of the desirability of keeping a year's food in the country. Two of the greatest authorities in the country, Sir Charles Fielding and Sir Herbert Matthews, who were both in the Ministry of Food during the war, have written or spoken about it. They should know more than anyone else, but they are not, as far as I know, on any of these committees.

This need of defending the national larder is recognized by practically all continental countries. Even so pacific a country as Sweden, probably the most pacific in the world, has been striving for years, in spite of its climatic conditions (far less favourable than our own), to make itself entirely self-supporting, and this year it has succeeded in doing so. As for Germany, according to a striking paragraph in *Agriculture*, the semi-official organ of the Ministry, she has recently raised her storage accommodation for wheat and rye to seven million tons, an increase of 46 per cent. in the number of store-rooms and 53 per cent. in capacity. She has also accumulated an immense supply of fresh and preserved food, besides expanding her agriculture in every possible way.

I can only deal fully here with the question of a proper wheat reserve. But, after all, bread is the most essential of all; we can at a pinch do without other foods, necessary as they are to a complete diet, but we cannot do without our daily bread.

The problem divides itself into two parts; how much wheat do we need to store, and how are we to store it?

We started the last war with five months' supply, and in 1917

we had only fourteen days in hand between us and starvation. Clearly, five months' supply is not enough. Sir Herbert Matthews, whom I have already mentioned, has declared we need a year's supply. Let us err on the side of moderation and pitch our requirements at ten months. How can we most effectively and economically secure this ?

1. We can raise the wheat quota on which the full deficiency is paid from six million to eight million quarters. There is plenty of land suitable for the purpose without breaking up good pastures. With the present rise in the price of wheat it will in all probability—in spite of the increase—cost the Government less than the quota last year. Unfortunately owing to the Government's shilly-shallying the autumn seed-time has been allowed to go by, and spring-sown wheat will in many cases only give half the yield. Still, let us hope that farmers, tempted by an increased quota, will sow a larger acreage, enough to give us two months' supply for the latter months of the cereal year, after allowing for the amount they must thrash out for farm requirements. A small bonus given for every month after February would induce them no doubt to keep the requisite amount in the stack. There is no better way of keeping English wheat. Besides, it would save some two and a half millions for silos and granaries which would otherwise have to be provided.

2. A census taken in the summer revealed that millers were running their mills on skeleton stocks, at one time only holding six weeks' supply. If they and the bakers were given a bonus to keep their silos, granaries, and flour bins full, we could probably reckon on over four months' supply. The bonus could be paid on the excess of their average holdings during the last two or three years. But there must be no breach of faith on the part of the Government, as occurred during the last war when, after a solemn promise that prices should be kept steady if the millers held maximum stocks, Mr. Runciman flung a large amount of the Indian crop on the market, and the too-confiding millers lost hundreds of thousands of pounds.

3. This leaves us to provide storage accommodation for four months' supply. Two of the greatest experts in England have told me independently that this could be provided at an outlay of £10,000,000, about one and a half times the cost of a modern



battleship. Unfortunately most of our big mills are situated on the East Coast, at Hull, London, and other places, and thus, like Woolwich Arsenal, are peculiarly exposed to aerial attack. The new storing places should therefore be spread about, mainly in the West of England. In place of some of these new buildings, one might possibly utilize many of the numerous country mills which were shut down owing to the rationalization of the industry. The possibility of adopting some of the disused cotton mills in Lancashire might also be considered. One further instance of the ill-effects of the Government's procrastination. Had they purchased only four months ago the amount of surplus wheat which this scheme requires, they would have saved millions and started with a handsome balance in hand. Let us only hope that when the time comes they will buy this wheat from the Dominions, not from some foreign country.

And now for a few words on the other kinds of food, the principle one of which is meat. If the Pig Marketing Scheme is maintained, we are certain of having an abundance of bacon, and some system of storage of pig meat could no doubt be devised. But beef is by far and away the most important item. Cold storage can do a great deal, but the one indispensable thing is to put the home production of beef on a sound footing, which the present totally inadequate proposals before Parliament cannot possibly do. It is impossible to over-estimate the value of the saving of ship room, thus providing for the importation of other necessities, which the restoration of this sorely depressed branch of agriculture could effect. Much, too, can be done by an extension of the canning industry, not only for vegetables but for meat. A great deal of the cow beef with which the market is flooded today could be sent instead to the canneries, to the profit of the fat cattle industry. But canneries are not built in a day, and so far no public steps have been taken to encourage their building.

And, lastly, a vigorous wheat and beef policy would be of incalculable value, first to agriculture, which the Government's half-hearted policy has done no more than keep alive, and which is an industry which has not shared in the return of prosperity ; and, secondly, to the land itself which, owing to the unremunerative prices the farmer has been receiving, has seriously deteriorated

in many parts of the country. The matter assumes the gravest aspect, if on the outbreak of war we are called upon, as in 1914, to produce as much as possible in this country. You cannot restore the lost fertility of the land at short notice, nature refuses to be hurried.

The speedy adoption of all-round food defence schemes would have an untold psychological effect on the minds of the civil population. The knowledge of how near we were to disaster in 1917 was a source of intense anxiety to the few who were aware of our imminent peril. It will not be possible to hide these things in another war. The fighting spirit of an army largely depends on what their parents, wives, and children for whom it is fighting, are thinking. It was in fact the collapse in morale of the German people which largely contributed to the collapse of the German army. An adequate supply of food would do far more than anything else to keep the nerves of the nation steady.

One would have thought the remembrance of the endless food queues in which women stood for hours for their scanty rations in the last war would have roused the Government from their comparative lethargy, especially if they recalled, as every parent and teacher who was alive at the time recalls, the grievous injury, often lasting for life, to the health, nerves, and constitution of the growing generation of the time. The Government have recently shown a highly commendable interest in the vital question of national nutrition and the reduction of the high percentage of C3 people—again brought into prominence by the recruiting question. It is therefore strange that they have failed to grasp the urgent necessity of putting some of their complicated food plans into operation at once in order to prevent a far more crushing blow to our national physique. It was Danton who said, "*Après le pain, l'éducation.*" Without neglecting the children's education, let the Government make certain that the requisite food for children is in any event forthcoming. If they do not, history will not spare the politicians who, while there was yet time, failed to take the necessary steps.

## THE TWO CRANES

BY REARDEN CONNER

**A**LL day long the young crane had followed the old crane. From one fishing ground to another it had flown in the wake of the older bird, haunting it like a shadow. Towards evening the old crane came to a neck of the river hemmed in by low-growing willows. This was its favourite fishing ground. Up to now it had not shared it with any other bird, nor had any of the lively younger ones dared to follow it so far up river.

The old crane was wise and slow of movement. It flapped down to the edge of the bank and rested, almost motionless, waiting for the younger bird to follow it. The young crane resented its wisdom and its slow definite movements, slow not with age but with the experience that the years bring. The old crane stood very still, with its long sharp beak pressed down on its breast as though it were about to sleep. It did not attempt to fish. It did not seem to be observing the river at all. It looked a very old bird in that position. The young crane despised it.

The young crane was restless. It strutted up and down the river bank. It entered the water and waded past a clump of reeds. A water-hen darted out from the reeds and gave its shrill cry. The sound startled the young crane, although it knew that it did not mean danger. It turned down river and passed the old crane, now seemingly asleep on the bank. It was angry and wanted to attack this old bird that was so indifferent to the need of food.

The fishing had not been good that day and the young crane was hungry. In an hour it would be dusk. Already the sky was beginning to tinge with the first faint smoke of night. The young crane jerked at the water with its beak, but it was not fishing. It was standing in front of the old crane, jerking with its beak and throwing back its head as though it were swallowing



fish rapidly. The old crane watched it without changing its position or opening its eye too wide.

After a while the young crane grew wild with anger. It seemed to grow larger as though its wrath were puffing it out. It rose into the air and flapped its wings wildly, dropping down to the water now and again with noisy splashes. The old crane continued to watch it and felt irritated because it was frightening the fish by its foolish tactics.

Presently the young crane grew weary. It thought that it, too, would display wisdom. It rose high into the air and flew away across the field as though it were leaving the older bird to its slumbers. This was a ruse to make the old bird fish. But the old bird did not move. The young crane was drunk with rage now. It flew higher, then dived like a bolt at the old crane. The older bird heard its approach and seemed to sense its purpose. It dodged, without seeming to surrender its position on the bank, and flashed its beak sideways. The young crane shot past its head, out across the river, baffled and dazed with rage, a red spot appearing on its breast where the beak of the older bird had ripped into the flesh.

It dropped to the water and waded down river. In the shelter of a clump of reeds it began to plume its damaged breast, dipping its beak in the clear water and rubbing its blood-dyed feathers. The old crane did not seem to heed its movements. It stretched up its body, shook out its wings, and settled down on the bank once more, as though the young crane were not in existence.

The young crane's rage had died down now. It began to feel respect for the older bird. It, too, settled itself on the bank. It was waiting for the old crane to begin fishing. But it grew impatient soon and rose into the air again. It flew up river, keeping a sharp eye on the water. A hundred yards above on the river bank a goat and a kid stood, studying its progress. The kid was nervous at the sight of the big bird, looking so ungainly as it flapped along. It began to bleat unhappily edging nearer to its mother.

Out in the field an old ass was resting, lying on its side, almost motionless like the old crane. The young crane was curious. It flew towards the ass, rising high into the air. From a height

the grey-brown ass looked like a sprawling rock. The young crane swooped down and landed some yards away from the ass. It saw the ass's ears move as flies tickled them. That satisfied its curiosity. It began to plume its wounded breast once more.

Shortly afterwards a man came into the field and began to shout in a strong voice. The old ass leaped to its feet and ran across the field, away from the man. The man beat the turf with a stick and shouted louder than ever. The young crane was terrified. It flew towards the river, seeking the comforting presence of the older bird.

The old crane was in no way perturbed. It was holding its head erect, watching the man and the ass. It did not look at the young crane, now standing below it in the river. It saw the ass come to a halt in mid-field and wait for the man to approach. Then it watched the man and the ass amble towards the gate in the far corner of the field.

It wore an expression of satisfaction in its wise eyes now, as though it had known that the man would fetch the ass from the field and had been waiting patiently for him to come and go. It shook out its wings, folded them carefully again, looked up and down the river, then stepped gently into the water. It began to move up river, away from the young crane. It did not wade with little splashing noises like the young crane. It lifted its feet with great deliberation and set them down tenderly as though the water were over-warm from the day's hot sun. It paused for a moment, looking up at the sky as though measuring its time.

Then it began to fish. Its beak flashed down and lifted in one sweeping movement. It had swallowed a small sleeping fish in a twinkling. The young crane was startled afresh at this exhibition. It was jealous of the old crane's ability to find fish where fish did not seem to exist.

It followed the older bird closely, watching that ready beak with eyes that glistened with new rage. Suddenly the old crane paused over a deep pool under the river bank. It stood staring into the water, as though it had come upon the pool unexpectedly instead of merely reaching its goal. Then its beak flashed down and was upraised holding a wriggling eel. But with a speed even quicker the young crane had dived forward

and upward and had seized hold of the eel's tail, lifting the prize clean away from the older bird's beak.

Up, up, rose the young crane, swallowing hard, gorging its stolen meal. It swept out over the field. For a moment the old crane stood as though it had been stunned by a falling branch. Then it, too, rose and dived after the younger bird. Now its turn had come to be gripped by rage. All day long it had borne the young bird's interference with dignified patience. It had permitted this intruder to join in its private fishing ground. But now, at the close of day, there was murder in its heart. Its rage was not the hot rage of youth, but a cold and callous feeling that would not be quelled until its purpose had been fulfilled.

Three years before it had killed a crane of its own age. It knew how to kill its kind. There would be a swift and steady flight until the younger bird tired, then a manœuvring for position, then a downward dive and the fatal blow.

The young crane sensed the fearful mood of the older bird. It rose higher, higher still, heading all the time towards a cluster of houses beyond the fields. Here it hoped, somehow, to shake off the older bird. Over the houses it began to circle. It saw the old crane still pursuing it relentlessly. It was tiring already. It was so young that its wings were weak yet. Suddenly beyond the roof-tops it saw the fringes of a wood. It dropped down, dived below the old crane, and skimmed over the roofs towards the wood. In a second it had left clear space and had shot like a weighted arrow into a bunch of telegraph wires. Its wings were smashed and entangled before it had recovered from the shock of contact. It tried to turn, to rise up, to drop down. But it was held tighter than any fish had ever been clutched in its own beak.

Above it the old crane soared, turned, and disappeared below the houses behind the telegraph wires, making steadily for the river. The film of smoke over the sky had deepened now and dusk had come at last. No one in that sleepy place seemed to heed the twanging of the wires.

In the morning small boys discovered the body of the young crane. They flung stones at it and laughed at the way its feet and neck hung down from the wires. Then they went away and forgot it, leaving it to the hundreds of flies that came out with the bright sun of the early day.



## ODDFELLOWS

BY ROMILLY JOHN

I CAN remember being very much puzzled in my childhood by the words "Oddfellows Hall," engraved over the doorway of a building in Poole. And when a child is puzzled, his imagination, unrestricted by an accumulation of facts, sometimes reaches a more fundamental view of phenomena than would occur to the adult of whom he is said to be the father. In this case, my childish wonder led me to elaborate a theory about "oddfellows" which, if extended to the world at large, might have a certain grim appropriateness. I thought of them as beings whose doom it was to have been born each with some repulsive peculiarity and who, because nobody else would have anything to do with them, had formed a club. They appeared to me as a melancholy, almost lunatic tribe, miserable in solitude, together (in such humiliating circumstances) incapable of enjoyment.

As I grew older, the visionary gleam began to fade. Or rather, this particular day-dream expanded into a conviction that oddity is part of the normal order of life. And now the world, in my eyes, has taken on the aspect of a vast Oddfellows Hall, shorn, it is true, of the macabre qualities with which I invested the building in Poole—for, after all, we on earth have only each other to associate with, and therefore need not feel outcast or abashed.

By the time I was eight, this attitude had so far crystallized that I could have no doubt of the verisimilitude of Dickens; nor will I yet allow his creations to be exaggeration, or "caricatures." Indeed, he himself, in his letters, sometimes mentions real incidents altogether too strange to be of use to him as a novelist. Yes, there were snowy peaks in the geography of behaviour which he dared not paint, for was he not already held to be far-fetched?

Nature is the caricaturist. Biologists find strange exaggerations in the animal kingdom, and botanists a kind of insanity among the vegetables. It may be objected that my own conviction of life's oddity is due to my having been brought up in an unconventional *milieu* ; perhaps, but then I have not found any reason to modify it on a wider experience. On the contrary, it has been triumphantly confirmed by the discovery that it is precisely "normal people" who are capable, on occasion, of the wildest flights.

"But in what does this absurdity consist?" I seem to hear. Well, I shall not send the sceptic, for enlightenment, to works of fiction, since nothing is proved by them: next to life itself, a course of biography is indicated. The recorded acts and sayings of eminent men furnish a plentiful supply of delightful absurdity; the biography which fails to throw, at times, a ridiculous light on human nature is, I would go so far as to say, a pompous lie. For instance, of Maria Theresa's chief adviser we are told that "he once had a glass box made to fit over himself and his saddle when he went out riding, because he was afraid that the fresh air would make him ill." He also invented hair powder. Suppose Dickens, and not nature, had produced this conception of a diplomat! A general in a novel would hardly write pamphlets (like General Gordon) to prove that the forbidden fruit must have been a coconut; nor would an artist in a novel maintain (like one I know) that it was in fact a banana. No, the one would be too busy grooming his moustaches and getting red in the face, while the other would be wholly occupied in wearing his hair long and being a man of genius: both alike suffering, growing a little deader, for the limitations imposed on them.

But the fact is, the majority can scarcely bring themselves to believe in a display of oddity, even while it is in progress before their eyes; and there is an almost irresistible tendency, thereafter, to suppress its memory. Even I, who make a speciality of the unlikely, am not immune from that. Looking back into the past, I seem to see myself, a lad of fifteen, bicycling one dark winter's night, at about eleven, along the road to Poole; perched on the step is a well-known figure, a great man and a large; and we are on the way to a party to which neither has been

invited. The rest of the family had long since taken themselves off, complete with car, leaving us *tête-à-tête*, to brood with mortification on the inequalities of life till we could bear it no longer. What were the reactions of our host and family when we appeared in this manner, the vision saith not. But my own feelings about the episode, at this distance of time, is that it just could not have occurred ; and if *I* find a departure from the normal so dream-like in retrospect, what must the same sort of thing be for those who really believe in normality ?

To the average Englishman, odd ideas are things which originate in the minds of "cranks," while extraordinary behaviour springs from a kind of lunacy. Well, that is perfectly sensible ; only, he is not aware that he himself is, in all probability, a bit cranky, and sane merely in spots. By assuming that cranks are rare birds and that oddity is a thing seldom met with he obliterates his own and the national instability, and enables himself to continue in the idea that he and his country are, above all things, fundamentally "sound." I cannot help thinking that the man who considers himself brilliant is perhaps more healthily, though less interestingly, conceited. He, at any rate, feels the necessity of exerting his intellect ; but soundness is such a mystical quality, its possession seems to depend so much on physical bulk and mental inertia. And the worst of this kind of inertia is that its possessors cannot always be relied upon to keep still ; every now and then something sets them in motion, and before they come to rest again an infinite amount of damage may have been done. I doubt if "sound" people ought to be allowed at large ; they are a danger to the community, an irresistible force.

And there are frequently very queer ideas inside those massive, irreproachable skulls of theirs. The fact is, such minds are the heaps on which the age dumps its lunacies, the kind of lunacy, I mean, not to have a touch of which is to be thought rather "queer."

But then, one can generally tell what a sound person will think, because his ideas, however odd, are shared at the moment by nearly everyone. What fascinate me are the ideas a man can get no one to share with him ; and here I have an advantage over most people. Ever since I was capable of taking an interest in thought, my unfeigned pleasure in listening while men pro-



pounded their philosophies has been a magnet to all who had one. I have, for example, been told (by a high railway official) that time has six directions. For all I can say, of course, it may have seventy-seven. It may also be true that, as another person assures me, space has three dimensions, the first, second, and fourth—rather on the analogy of an English railway carriage, which overleaps, for some reason, the second class. However, my informant was an artist, and I seem to see a taint of professionalism in his view, when I remember that his pictures often completely ignored the third dimension.

Recently, in my own rather cranky way, I entertained the idea of building a house with my own hands, and went to see a man who had discovered how this could be done almost entirely out of chalk. He had been experimenting with chalk for a number of years, mixing it with glue and various other substances to give it cohesion. On his own admission, he could "talk chalk for ever," but his horizon was not bounded entirely by this material, or by the view from the top of the down upon which he lived. No: in a word, he contemplated a chain of colonies extending over the whole of Europe, the buildings of which would presumably be constructed out of his favourite substance, wherever obtainable. What useful purpose these colonies were to serve I have now forgotten. Not long before I met him his own chalk house had been burnt out, a circumstance which gave him great satisfaction, in that it afforded a proof that chalk walls are incombustible. Who knows, his schemes may one day be put into execution, to the infinite advantage of us all. But until that happens, the great majority will, I fear, remain crassly sceptical on the subject of chalk.

The truly authentic oddfellows are quite disinterested, and often lay themselves open to the suspicion or even mockery of the world. More fortunate are those few whose ideas involve no conflict with the established order. Such was another artist of my acquaintance, who believed that his paintings in some way upheld and illustrated Einstein's theory. Not being himself a mathematician, he remained uncertain exactly how. He was anxious that a mathematical friend of mine should inspect these works, and make clear to him their precise connection with relativity. And obviously, if Einstein's view of the universe is

to be accepted, they must have had one. One cannot lightly dismiss a notion because it sounds cranky. And yet, in a world where an eminent Frenchman could lay it down that "the women of Egypt prostitute themselves to crocodiles," it is no less clear that a great deal of erroneous thinking may and will take place.

But there are some people congenitally incapable of contributing anything substantial to the sum of error : those people, I mean, who are always on the point of making a great discovery, yet at the same time never know quite what it will be about. The Einstein illustrator belonged, I think, essentially to this class : he had a profound conviction of he didn't know what. I am particularly fond of the great inarticulates, as they may be called ; in their society, when I can get them to talk, I feel not far from a solution of the ultimate mystery.

In Peacock, and to a less extent, a few other novelists, we meet ideas as a subject of humour, but the ideas they make use of are apt to be fairly "rational." There remains a vast field from which no writer has culled more than a wild flower or two in passing. Here is a chance for an original genius, in this age which seems to demand always something new. But a word of warning : no writer can hope to do much with it who is not prepared on all occasions to listen, and listen with pleasure, to ideas which are at once the most absorbing to those who hold them and the most tedious to the world at large. If he can do that, well. . . . As a Polish gentleman once said to me of agriculture (wiping from his brow the sweat engendered by conflict with a small and excessively weedy portion of English ground) : "In a few years, it will be an interesting study." Our author may rest assured that though I for one shall not gasp and stretch my eyes at the result of his patience, I shall always be delighted to read his books. And never, he may be certain, will it occur to me to dismiss him as a caricaturist.

## CHAIN STORES AND THE PRIVATE TRADER

BY CAPTAIN BERNARD ACWORTH, D.S.O., R.N.

**I**N this article I propose to consider the effect of the present economic trend on the retail and distributive trades.

Throughout this country, as in many others, such as the United States and Belgium, where this has become a burning question which compels the attention of legislators, private traders are mobilizing in self-defence against the great accumulations of capital behind the chain stores, the multiple shops, and the co-operative movement which threaten not only their independence, but their livelihood. But in their alarm there is a danger that they may be induced to advocate policies which involve injustice to rivals, big and small. They would thus invite further regulations and restrictions on trade which, though seemingly a safeguard to their own particular businesses, would almost certainly accentuate the pressure to which they are already in danger of succumbing.

During the past few weeks the writer has had the advantage of meeting responsible representatives of various federations and associations of private traders—grocers, drapers, fish-friers, coal retailers, and other callings. All, in various ways and in various degrees, are seeking a means of safeguarding themselves and their businesses from forms of competition which they feel to be unfair. Emphasis has in all cases been laid upon what is regarded as a fair deal, and for more than bare justice the writer has heard no plea from any genuine private trader.

The question of what is fair and just is, however, the crux of the difficulty, and before attempting to reach a conclusion it may be of interest to set out briefly the causes of complaint.

The outstanding menace to private traders is undoubtedly the big chain stores and multiple shops on the one hand, and the Co-operative movement on the other. The former represent great accumulations of capital, raised for the most part by



banks, insurance companies, and finance houses. Just recently, it will be remembered, 2½ millions was provided by the Prudential Company for the erection of 24 new premises for a great chain-store firm.

The Co-operative movement, on the other hand, derives its great financial resources, as does the Prudential, from the savings of hundreds of thousands of poor people, and all three have this in common. Vast sums of money are placed under the control of a few individuals whose personal risks and liabilities are as slight as are their power and personal remuneration apt to be great. Not only have these great aggregations of capital an almost unlimited reservoir of money upon which to draw for the extension of their premises, but they can command reserves of capital which, for a time, can be used for cutting prices to a point at which the private trader, to whom large capital reserves are not available, is squeezed out of business.

But these financial reserves at the disposal of impersonal trading organizations are reinforced as a weapon against private traders by credit and price advantages from manufacturers and producers ; advantages that are not always available to the private businesses from which orders for goods are relatively small, if not, from the Big Business point of view, negligible. Furthermore, there is a growing tendency, encouraged by legislation, for distributive combines to become financial patrons or partners of producing combines, with growing powers granted to them by Parliament for compulsorily "liquidating," or "rationalizing," their independent competitors. If these powers are not withdrawn, consumers in general, and private traders in particular, will be at the mercy of a few manufacturing and distributing monopolies with the resources of the banks, insurance companies, and finance houses at their disposal.

But this threat from Big Business is not the only competition to which the private trader is now subjected, and which he feels to be unfair. He is experiencing, in two spheres, the growing competition of the very small "mushroom" private trader. First, there is the man or woman who, through loss of his or her normal employment, starts a tiny shop without any experience of retail trade and with no capital to support it. This new phenomenon—for on the present scale it is a new

one—is mainly the outcome of industrial depression and it will cease to operate against the professional private trader when the economic condition of the country really improves.

The second form of competition by very small private traders, to which exception is taken, is the growing practice of trading and retailing in private houses as a means of avoiding the crushing rates and taxes which established shopkeepers have to bear. This again is a form of competition which will diminish, if it does not disappear, when the present burden of rates and taxes for social services is reduced to tolerable proportions.

The foregoing are the main threats to private traders from Big Business on the one hand, and from the enterprise of the very small man on the other. There is, however, another curious development which several representative private traders have mentioned to the writer.

There seems to be a new specialist known as “ the professional shop-opener.” New shops suddenly appear within the natural territory, so to speak, of an established private trader, remaining in being long enough to reduce his profits to the vanishing point, and then frequently, though not always, vanishing when they have done their work. Examples of this form of “ shop breaking ” have been cited to the writer in Leeds. As a professional shop-owner must clearly have large capital behind him it is readily believed, though difficult to prove, that such shops, established under various names, are in reality weapons in the hands of those who direct the operations of the chain stores, multiple shops, and, possibly, the Co-operative movement.

Before turning to the question of how to restore a fair deal to the privately-owned shop, without inflicting injustice on chain stores or the “ mushroom ” private trader, it may be well to draw attention to certain inherent advantages which the small private trader enjoys. First and foremost is the natural advantage enjoyed by a shop which is the property of a family, and which is operated mainly by members of the family.

In such businesses there is no wage problem because the family, as a whole, benefits from the success of the business. Such businesses, even when one or two wage-earners are employed, are in many cases, if not in all, a family affair in which those employed receive that fair consideration which is an

outstanding feature of sound family life. This is essentially a natural advantage, and one against which impersonal businesses, run entirely by wage and salary earners, would find it hard to prosper did they not have at their disposal those great financial powers and advantages to which allusion has already been made.

The other outstanding advantage which the private trader can command is that personal good will and understanding between himself, his family, and his clients which must necessarily be absent in the relatively soulless chain-stores, and multiple or co-operative shops.

It would be absurd to overlook the fact that multiple shops and chain stores offer certain attractions to shoppers which small privately-owned businesses lack. This must be so, as otherwise there would be no case to consider. The multiple store provides not only an "umbrella," under which the varied requirements of customers can be met, but they also provide, especially for women folk, something in the nature of an exhibition in which they can walk about in warmth and comfort, and enjoy themselves in the universally popular pastime of "shop-gazing." These multiple shops, in common with chain stores, have the further advantage, to which allusion has already been made, of being able in many cases to accept lower prices for similar articles than the private trader could afford to charge. Against these two undoubted attractions are to be set the growing lack of variety in quality and price in chain stores and their failure to give credit to the poor in hard times.

There are other aspects of this trading question which seriously affect consumers, but lack of space prevents their consideration. Let us turn instead to certain social changes which have exercised a powerful influence in expanding the business of impersonal trading at the expense of the private trader. The most important of these are the "humanitarian" legislation of past years. Notable examples are to be found in the Shop Acts. These Acts, introduced with the highest motives by legislators, at the instigation of a well-meaning public, have benefited chain-stores and multiple shops for this reason. In family shops there could be no demand for compulsory closing hours, because attendance on the shop would be a matter of family arrangement. On the other hand, in the case of chain stores and multiple shops, which



are managed by and employ nothing but hired labour, legislation which strictly regulates shop hours is of incalculable advantage because the hired shop assistants and managers would not work longer hours for the same wages. If, therefore, they were subjected to the competition in the evening of privately owned shops they would be compelled to employ double staff if they wished to check the drift of their poorer customers from the chain stores to their private rivals.

Having outlined some of the principal features which confuse the issues between private traders and their powerful, but impersonal, rivals, the writer will conclude by setting out as briefly as possible what adjustments he considers desirable in order to restore a perfectly fair field and no favour to the rival interests.

First of all, he would repeat that a return of general prosperity to the country would automatically remove many of the difficulties under which our private traders are now labouring. The growth of chain stores is a symptom of depression, but a return of general prosperity would still leave certain injustices which require rectification if the private trader is to have a fair deal. Clearly, the natural advantages of good will and family trading must remain unaffected by legislation for the simple reason that these advantages are natural. Increased prosperity must lead to a fall in the burden of rates and taxes. A reduction in rates would reduce the present tendency for private traders to relinquish their shops and to trade in their private houses. Improved opportunities of employment would tend to withdraw from the retail trade those tiny mushroom shops which in recent years have proved a thorn in the side of regular and experienced shopkeepers. It therefore seems that no action against the unwelcome competition from small mushroom private businesses is necessary or desirable. We thus have only to consider what legislative action is needed to remove the unfair advantages which great aggregations of capital enjoy over the genuine private trader who owns and manages his own property and who risks all that he has.

In order to restore to the private shopkeeper his natural, and therefore legitimate, advantages of family management of his business, the Shop Acts should be reformed on the lines of allowing greater latitude for remaining open late. Men and

women working for wages in the great combine undertakings can be relied upon to demand increased wages for increased hours, or, alternatively, to resist extension of their present hours.

There only remains for consideration the tremendous power in the hands of a few men who have the handling of enormous sums of money, not their own, with which they can browbeat their private competitors. Though these great accumulations of capital are not in themselves immoral, being largely a symptom of bad trade and of the threats overhanging private ventures, they should surely pay for the overwhelming advantages which they necessarily enjoy. Unlike the natural advantages of private enterprise, these mass financial advantages are unnatural and extremely harmful. Should they not, therefore, be subject to a graduated Corporation tax, particularly in the realm of reserve capital, and safeguards against concealed financial control?

Captain Balfour's Shops (Retail Trading Safeguards) Bill contemplates licences for chain stores exceeding six under common control. It provides for a census of all shops, and three Retail Trade Commissioners will issue licences to chain stores. Aggrieved persons may appeal to an *ad hoc* tribunal, but there is no mention of a right of appeal to the Courts. Private traders may support the Bill as an apparent check to chain stores, but in rising to the bait they should not forget the hook. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent great capital accumulations from disguising their identity by the formation of subsidiary companies. Indeed, the proposed system may lead, ultimately, to an extension of chain stores and the licensing of all shops. When private shops become subject to inquisition the natural rights of citizens will be openly denied. Here are signs of a trap similar to the Marketing Boards. Beguiled by a vision of higher prices through the elimination of competitors, farmers have now subjected themselves to tyrannies under which they are writhing, and which bring them no commensurate advantage.

## THE SURFLEET EXPERIMENT

BY GEORGE GODWIN

**F**IVE years ago, Captain R. G. M. Wilson, a Sapper with a Cambridge honours science degree, acquired a three hundred acre farm at Surfleet, on the northern shores of the Wash, and began to experiment with intensive cultivation for food production. Before starting he had spent three years in studying continental methods of intensive cultivation and began operations with the assistance of a Dutch expert. Flat, like all the South Lincolnshire land, this Surfleet holding is well watered by tributaries of the Welland and has a fertile soil. In every way, a practical farming man would say, the place offered ideal conditions for just such an experiment.

Yet this land, with all these natural advantages, and with adjacent markets and waiting labour, had been so far allowed to go out of cultivation when Captain Wilson acquired it that it gave work to only three men and a boy. If one had inquired of local expert opinion why this had happened presumably the answer would have been that intensive food growing does not pay. When the present writer, attracted by reports, visited Surfleet a few weeks ago, he saw a farm upon which not a single rood remained uncultivated ; a farm of new and modern buildings, glass-houses, experimental gardens, orchards and innumerable frames ; a farm whose land was whip-clean, and whose acres now give all-the-year-round employment to upwards of a hundred men and women. It is this land which produces fruits and vegetables of such quality that last year their grower was awarded the coveted Silver Medal of the Royal Agricultural Society for all England. If one farm can thus be transformed from a moribund condition to one of phenomenal fecundity, there must be many more. It is the possibility of a wide application of the methods in use at Surfleet that gives this experiment significance and a national importance.

While I can claim no knowledge of the science of soil fertiliza-



tion, which is the root of the matter, practical experience as a rancher in British Columbia was useful during a long day spent in seeing every aspect of the Surfleet work. What I do assert is that this experiment deserves far more attention than it has received, that it has scientific authority behind it, and that the system had remarkable success in India and on large estates in East Africa.

The land itself has been parcelled out with an eye to the conservation of labour; long wind-breaks protect the growing crops from the prevalent east winds; a light railway system links all parts of the land with the compost pits—the heart of the system—about which more presently.

The salient facts which strike the visitor to Surfleet may be briefly summarized. They are the absence of disease, the healthy state of the soil, the quality of the crops, indicated by form, colour, texture, and taste. Turning to the method employed, one may be as brief. The only system of manuring and fertilizing used is the compost system, the homogeneous resultant of the special treatment of all botanical and animal refuse, plus stable manure from local hunting stables and cavalry depots. For the first three years the Dutch and French methods were applied, but it was only when the compost system was used that the results became so striking and a degree of success was achieved which exceeded the hopes of the experimenter. In theory, the chemist in his laboratory can supply the grower with all that he needs to make his land fecund. But in practice the abundant use of such fertilizing materials has been found to have certain unforeseen consequences. One is that the soil, violently over-stimulated, reacts as violently into a state of exhaustion. Crops thus raised were seen to be remarkable for size, but of coarse texture and savourless in the kitchen.

This limitation upon what may be won from the earth by artificial manures, that is to say, mineral inorganic fertilizers, indicates clearly the limits of such methods. The alternative now being applied with such dramatic results at Surfleet is new only to England. It is neither more nor less than the Indore compost system as worked out by Sir Albert Howard, as Director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore, and now used extensively in India and East Africa. Sir Albert Howard noticed

that those native cultivators who returned to the land all waste botanical and animal, from it, were obtaining crops which were in every way superior to those being grown by himself with all the resources of a modern experimental station. He decided that the native cultivator, inheritor of a tradition as old as time was the more scientific grower and that what agriculture needed was not modern discovery, but the rediscovery of lost knowledge. Science, in a word, had to learn at the feet of antiquity.

The systematized manufacture of a compost was begun, the object being to produce, economically, the properly fermented organic matter that is the pre-requisite for healthy crops. It was found impracticable to prepare the humus on the land itself, for the humus impedes growth. It is therefore prepared in special pits, into which is pressed all manner of vegetable waste and animal manures to be broken down under high temperature. Thence it is carried on light railway trucks to any part of the land. The humus that results from this process is not unlike that leaf-mould to be found thick on the forest floors in British Columbia. It is organic, a substance compounded of the broken-down properties of botanical and animal life and a wide range of substances synthesized by the activities of fungi and bacteria. The humus thus dealt with has two properties: the bio-chemical and the chemical; the first providing good soil for the micro-organisms, the second resulting in its combination with soil bases. Thus the Indore method uses fungi and bacteria as they occur in nature to break down animal and botanical waste from the land itself.

At the Indore station, the waste from 300 acres yielded a thousand cartloads of humus per annum until that treated acreage "stood out like an oasis from the surrounding land." The great plantation industries, always alert for new ideas, were quick to realize that here was the germ of a revolution in crop production and an answer to the riddle of sustained fertility. During the following years (1925-1930) the Indore compost system was applied to the growing of tea, sugar, sisal, coffee and other crops. The experience of large-scale growers with the method is not without value and interest.

In Kenya, for example, Major Belcher, manager of the Kingalori Estate, near Kyambi, began to make compost in 193

and produced some 2,000 acres at a cost of 4s. 4d. a ton. Other Kenya growers followed, and in Tanganyika, largely owing to the advocacy of Sir Milsom Rees, there were further successes. In Africa the system offers a solution to the problem of the shifting cultivation of the land as practised by the natives. One area cropped, the native grower moves on. Such a system can be practised only in lands with vast cultivable areas and thin populations. In many parts of Africa the old system is no longer possible, and Sir Daniel Hall suggests that the compost system, taught to the native, offers a solution. It is the fact, according to a wide diversity of reports examined, that wherever the Indore system has been applied by practical growers the results have been as remarkable as those seen at Surfleet. For example, in Rajputana, after the introduction of the system, crops of thirty tons to the acre were raised on a compost composed of *sann* hemp.

What is the value of this system to the food problem of England? If what Captain Wilson is doing in South Lincolnshire can be accomplished throughout agricultural England, then our land can not only produce in abundance the food we need, but can absorb much of the unemployed labour of the cities. It is an interesting fact that at Surfleet many of the hands taken on were men who had no previous experience of the land, and these men are learning quickly and making the change-over from town to country with unexpected ease. A miner was encountered on the London road, walking from Durham in search of work. He was offered work on the Surfleet land and accepted it. He has become an expert market gardener.

In passing, too, it is worth noting that the Indore system could utilize the municipal waste of our large cities, their crude sewage and sewage sludge, and this is already being done with success in several East African municipalities. The amazing range of apparently useless and noxious material that can be made useful to man has been revealed by the plant now in operation in Nairobi where such substances as coffee parchment, cannage waste, hair, wool and fleshings, horn and bone and so forth are broken down into a rich and valuable compost.

Let me quote from Sir Albert Howard: "It should not," he writes, "be beyond the resources of an organization like Imperial



Chemical Industries to acquire for a term of years the waste products of one of the Special Areas, preferably one with extensive peat deposits in the neighbourhood, and create a new local industry, which is certain to spread throughout the country."

There is another angle from which the matter must be viewed however. That humus can be manufactured economically, as suggested, has been already abundantly proved elsewhere. But there must be a ready market for the product. In other words growers have to be converted to the new system, and since most English growers are conservative in their approach to new methods, the progress of the Indore system, failing official encouragement, is likely to be somewhat slow. "What," asked Captain Wilson, "do your neighbours think about your nurseries?" "They think I am mad," he replied. To the conservative Lincolnshire farmer the large outlay of private capital which has made the Surfleet land what it is today, appears as a folly. Actually, it is quite otherwise, for expert valuation of the land shows that in five years it has trebled in value. When the virtues of the compost system as applied at Surfleet become widely known and applied, much of the neglected grass land of our countryside will cease to be a reproach to English agriculture.

Indeed, a start has already been made by Professor Stapleton on the sheep pastures of Wales. There is no impediment, so far as one can see, to the adoption of the compost system by every food grower in the country. The work at Surfleet is therefore a matter of national importance. For if one individual backed by no more than adequate capital, can transform a village community and bring into phenomenal productivity a farm long neglected, then the possibilities of the widespread application of such methods are obvious. One thing at any rate can scarcely be disputed: the Indore system which can be seen in practical operation at Surfleet must be given thorough and large-scale tests.

## EBB AND FLOW

### *A Monthly Commentary*

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

**M**ORE than two hundred years ago the genius of England began to mould a chosen family for a purpose which was also gradually being modelled. The attempt began awkwardly with two unattractive foreigners, having little in their favour but courage. Yet when George III succeeded his father, England already had in this English-born King something like what England wanted—a sovereign who should command respect, not adulation : first and foremost, an honest English gentleman, with a high sense of duty. The trouble was that neither England nor the King had yet realized exactly what the King of England's duty was to be. Last century gradually made that clear ; but it was not until after the old Queen's death that the world realized how finely the work of education had been done. The parting speech of the Prince whom we now know as the Duke of Windsor had nothing in it more significant than the reference to constant advice and guidance given him by his father, the King in whose reign monarchy was most severely tested, by internal crisis and by external convulsions.

Ambition was set aside without so much as a word. The young King enjoyed a personal popularity perhaps without parallel ; and could not help knowing it. He had a way with him that caught the crowd, and need only have shown himself in the streets to elicit demonstrations very difficult for any Government to withstand. The Government in power, though strongly supported, was not popular. What success it could claim was the result of that unpleasing virtue, a drastic economy. The Prime Minister's personal prestige had been shaken, there is no denying it, by the change of front over Abyssinia ; and his health had forced him to a period of withdrawal, while rumours of impending retirement weakened his authority. On the other

hand, the King by his visit to South Wales had made a dramatic gesture that raised hopes in the despairing. Ambition never had more ample material to work with ; and this was so strongly felt that Parliament instinctively began to demonstrate its loyalty to the man who represented the reality of elected power. That did good ; but it was not for the King that such demonstration was needed. Deliberately he shut himself within his own grounds and deliberately took counsel only with his Prime Minister. He accepted without question the decision that what he the King desired could not be done, simply because in the Prime Minister's judgment the elected representatives of Great Britain and of the Dominions would not consent to it.

There was, of course, another choice possible : the King might give up his wish to marry, in his own words, " the woman whom I love." It ought to be recognized that

**And a Moral** in this resounding action he took stand for a principle. Divorce is legal, but by unwritten law it still carries a stigma. King Edward evidently held that this unwritten law no longer commanded respect, and desired to make that plain, and much of the sympathy for him came from men and women who resent the whole position in regard to divorce. One thing which should follow from these happenings is a serious effort to bring the marriage law into harmony with ordinary moral judgment. Another, though here the urgency is less felt, is a review of the question of establishment. The issue already complex enough, was further entangled by the King's nominal headship of the Church of England. It was neither unnatural nor unreasonable that the Bishop of Bradford should call attention to his apparent lack of concern with religious Services. But is Parliament willing to impose church-going as an obligatory function on the King ?

The new King is less widely known in the Empire than his predecessor. That is not a defect. King Edward felt in excess that physical restlessness which is a feature of post-war times and his zeal to be a propagandist of British interests in the end of the earth withdrew him from the steady contact with English opinion through which the monarchy has been quietly guided—and which, indeed, would have taught him that his particu-



choice of a wife was impossible for a King of England. George the Sixth will not be less acceptable to the Commonwealth and to the Empire because his way of life has been less cosmopolitan and more English.

In the permanently distressing case of Ireland, matters will be no better than they were before. Acceptance of the King's marriage with a lady twice divorced would, of course, have made them worse. But Mr. de Valera has seized the chance which the troubled waters offered. He might indeed have made more trouble (if a view stated by Professor Berriedale Keith is correct) through a refusal to pass legislation endorsing the British Parliament's action. He has now endorsed it, but on terms of his own proposing. They are, however, new only in form, and once the Governor-General's function was reduced to a farce, it was better swept away. Probably Mr. de Valera's gesture will be disregarded by British opinion at large, even though it may be resented. Yet what it means should be noted. Mr. de Valera knows that he can declare a separate Republic for the Free State and that no forcible resistance will be offered, whatever may be the consequence to individual Irish citizens. Plainly he prefers that Ireland should remain in association with the British Commonwealth—even though it cannot be a contented association. The reasons why it cannot be, are given in a little book which I commend to all: *The Four Green Fields*, by Professor George O'Brien,\* a well-known writer on economics who has hitherto suppressed the talent for epigrammatic comment which enlivens his work. Yet the book cannot be called cheerful reading, for his conclusion is that while Partition lasts, Ireland never can work cordially with Great Britain, but that Great Britain could not, even if desiring it, end Partition without the consent of Ulster. This consent he regards as unattainable. Certainly Mr. de Valera's action in this crisis has not brought it any nearer. Loyalty to the Crown is Ulster's pride; and though in this late crisis there were expressions of disapproval in Belfast when King Edward's portrait was shown, because "loyalists" felt that he was giving those whom they regarded as "disloyalists" occasion

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\* Reviewed in this issue by Sean O'Faolain.

to blaspheme, yet the elaborate refusal of Mr. de Valera's political metaphysics even to mention the King's name will embitter feeling.

Everything has to be paid for, and it would be surprising if there were not a heavy price exacted for England's mistakes in Ireland down to our own day. Ireland can be kept within the Commonwealth, and I believe this to be in the interests of both countries. My own feeling is that time is on the side of common sense, and will tend to draw closer together not only England and Ireland but Ulster planters and the rest of Ireland. In any case it would be most unwise to provoke a new crisis within these islands at a time when the state of Europe is what we see it.

For the whole thing could not have come at a more dangerous moment. There is the obvious glaring peril in Spain where men of all nations mixed with Spanish combatants are contending for mastery of Madrid. That in itself is fruitful enough of risks, but need not involve more than the volunteers; nor can the war's issue be decided in Madrid. Yet one thing will be made more clear than it is at present—the true disposition of Spain. Napoleon conquered the country, but could not hold it because Spain was against him and backed Wellington. General Franco with an army largely Moorish made himself master of the South and West. Now that his onward course is checked, will the country that he mastered stand with him, or will it rise in his rear? If he came as a saviour—which was his claim—the event will make that claim good. It may disprove it. But the pith of the danger lies in conflict at sea. If the war is to become something like what the war was between Napoleon's marshals and Wellington it can only be because Great Britain and France allow armies to be transported there as Wellington's were. Up to the present munitions have come in bulk, but volunteers only by companies—now however it is admitted by Mr. Eden that Germans have landed at Cadiz up to a total of five thousand. General Franco has so far secured control of the sea that reinforcements to him come in freely. He now sets up a claim to establish a blockade.

In this attempt, German and Italian ships can assist formidably. After the denunciations hurled by these two Powers at Russia

no one could be surprised if some unit of either navy took action against a Russian vessel that might easily lead to war. Since, however, neither Italy nor Germany can reach Russia, nor Russia reach either of them, such an occurrence could only add new fervour to demonstrations by speech, by newspaper and by wireless. Matters would, however, become very grave if either a French or British vessel were treated with hostility on the high seas. One may dismiss the possibility of this measure being taken by an officially German or Italian vessel. But should it come to pass that General Franco's naval forces were as largely German or Italian in their composition as his air force is said to be, the situation would assume a new complexion either for England or for France. Again there is the danger that a French or English vessel may be deliberately bombed from the air by a machine, German or Italian manned, and of German or Italian make. Both England and France will be the more sensitive about the naval position because of the apprehension that, as an outcome of this Spanish struggle, Italy may be left with a naval base in the Balearics and Germany with one in the Canaries. Such bases would flank the routes to France's African possessions: they could threaten nearly all that England possesses overseas.

One may probably dismiss the supposition that General Franco's party will agree in advance to surrender of Spanish possessions as the price of assistance. It is, however, at least conceivable, in spite of the verbal assurances which have been given by Italy, that at the end of the Spanish war, whichever way it goes (and certainly the chance will not be less if Franco fails), the world may find these Powers installed in these places *de facto*, and disinclined to go out. In that event it would be convenient that there should still be a League of Nations to supply a mandate for assisting Spain to oust them. Yet what authority is now left to the League? And if the unlikely thing happened, and an accredited Spanish government made over these strategic points to other Powers, what pretext would either France or England have to interfere, that would be consistent with the professions made by both of them during the Great War and in the period after it? Could not Spain do what it would with its own?

The ultimate reality is that neither France nor England will



risk war unless some interest considered vital to each is assailed or unmistakably threatened (as was England's interest in Egypt by Italy's concentration in Libya) : whereas both Germany and Italy will take perilous action to prevent the establishment of a "Bolshevist" Power in Spain ; while Russia will do as much to forward that prospect. Initiative is left entirely to the less contented and therefore less pacifist Powers. Germany has used that initiative to form an understanding with Japan, clearly designed as a check on Russia. Italy has already used initiative in Northern Africa : she may use it again in the Mediterranean. It would appear then to the civilian mind that England can only ensure complete security for her sea routes by the closest understanding and co-operation with France, which will narrow the field practically open to ambitious enterprise.

The French have shown in a most explicit manner their desire for mutual insurance. M. Delbos declared in the Chamber that any unprovoked attack on England will be treated as an attack on France. This is none the less welcome because it is the logical corollary to Mr. Baldwin's statement that the British frontier is on the Rhine ; and so far as the Channel area is concerned, no pact between France and England is really needed. But, according to Mr. Eden, England's vital interests comprise the Mediterranean route and the security of Egypt. Can these be ensured without French co-operation ? Or on the other hand can France ensure free passage from her African possessions without British support ? Everything prompts the two democratic Great Powers to plan and to act together far beyond their common doorstep.

But if France is to be interested in the defence of Egypt, how does the matter stand in regard to England's attitude towards France's military or political alliances ? This is where danger to the peace of Europe is more real today, because it is less obvious than are risks on the Spanish coast ; yet every European Power knows that Great Britain is sensitive as to sea power. No fuss was made indeed when at an earlier stage of the Spanish war gunboats that had taken General Franco's side stopped or attacked British ships : these incidents were easily cleared up. But it would be a very different matter if the same were done by

a German or Italian destroyer—whether it flew the Spanish colours or no. That is not likely to happen because the consequences are foreseen. But nobody knows what England would do if Germany or Italy, separately or jointly, made some aggressive move against the Little Entente. Yet skilled observers think that all the signs point to a German move against Czechoslovakia which both Germany and Italy strive to detach from its allies ; and in the last month at least one leading English journal announced that in such case England would not attempt to intervene. The Czechs, according to Mr. Garvin, have brought the trouble on themselves. They have had the audacity to organize an *entente* including Rumania and Yugoslavia. Worse still, they have concluded an alliance of their own with Soviet Russia. Their extinction as a nation, if it comes to that, will apparently in his judgment be on their own heads.

It will be well for Englishmen of all classes to think about this matter in advance of events. Czechoslovakia owes the recognition of its existence as a free nation to the Treaty of Versailles, for which England had no less responsibility than France ; and from the standpoint of democratic civilization, Czechoslovakia has justified its right to a national existence more clearly than any other of the Succession States. The parts played by Masaryk and by Benesh after the war were worthy of the heroic march of the Czech Legion through Russia during the war. However we strive to clear our minds of inconvenient memory, we shall not be able to forget how these men were received at Geneva, how they were listened to. It is not going to be simply a case of Abyssinia over again where nothing more was at stake than the mere principle of justice and respect for the pledged honour of nations. Czechoslovakia has given an example in Eastern Europe of what men in France and in England regard as civilized and ordered freedom. Now, the French are pledged to defend that freedom if it be assailed. Russia is also pledged. When France is blamed, as she is frequently blamed, for the Soviet pact, it is to be remembered that only by forming that pact could France render effective her guardianship of the Succession States—among which Czechoslovakia is the one most imminently threatened.

**Threat to  
Czechoslovakia**

The object of Germany is, of course, to prevent by all means that close understanding between France and Great Britain which is essential to both these freedom-loving Powers. It is not easy to see how that understanding can be maintained if England definitely refrains from lending support to the security of a free nation for whose creation England was largely responsible. If, on the other hand, it is made clear at once in advance that encroachment on the territory of Czechoslovakia will be resisted by the power of France, of England and of Russia, acting in support of Czechoslovakia's own very competent and determined resistance, then the probability of aggression is pushed far away.

The truth is that we have got to get back to the reality of the League of Nations ; and the reality is a League of Europe, with the British Dominions counted in. Europe in  
**The League : A** America is forming its own League and may  
**New Conception** conceivably deal once and for all with what is a far less difficult problem. If the United States is willing to submit to American jurisdiction any dispute between itself and one of the smaller states, the thing can be done, since the United States has the power necessary to enforce any judicial verdict as between other states in an American League.

But in Europe, where a League must be formed with two Great Powers absent and hostile, the conditions are very different and it cannot be that easy amiable thing which British (and American) fancy pictured—a League of pious intentions where everybody would bow to moral verdicts : in practice, a League of which you could take just so much as seemed in your opinion to suit your own needs. This revised thing would have to be a League for mutual protection of its members, first, perhaps, against one another ; secondly, against the outside Powers. It would have to face the necessity of being disagreeable to the outside Powers, even in peace time ; and it would have to be ready to throw out any disloyal member. In short, it would have to be, or rather will have to be—for one day it must exist—a fighting League. It is only English country villages that can afford a lethargic amiable policeman.

But whether we act in the League, for the League, and with the League, or no, this Czechoslovak danger concerns all civilized



Europe. The thing to avoid is that England should awake to the facts too late and begin demonstrating ineffectually when she sees liberty having its throat cut. Here is a live effective and most creditable member of the League of Nations threatened by a Power—or by a combination of Powers—hostile to the principles of the League of Nations. The world should know, and England should know, where, if that threat becomes active, England will be found.

It is undeniable that the challenged position is assailable. The Treaty of Versailles, completed by that of Trianon, left eight million Czechs controlling a state of fifteen million people—three and a half million of them Germans. It left fifteen million Magyars with a population of eight million Magyars inside Hungary and the balance under foreign rule—a million or so under Czechs. A state so constituted as Czechoslovakia cannot last unless it makes its Germans prefer to belong there than to the Reich. That should not be impossible : France has done it in Alsace-Lorraine. But the true model for Czechoslovakia is Switzerland where minorities and majorities have alike full effective citizenship. In Czechoslovakia it is true that representation is given to minorities ; but all control is kept in Czech hands. That may be unavoidable at present. But if it is to be regarded as perpetual, not all Europe can make Czechoslovakia last.

All the perturbations of these last weeks have lessened public concentration on a dramatic event, long deferred and not the less exciting. Forty years ago a young Scotch

**The Art of  
Acting**

writer, all of whose traditions and upbringing had kept him specially aloof from the stage,

suddenly emerged as a popular dramatist, and till long after the Great War gave me more pleasure, and gave me pleasure more often, than any other playwright. Then he stopped writing. Last year, after fifteen years' silence, he turned back to his art, moved by the appearance of a new actress whose genius seemed to him without parallel. And this play which he wrote for her was one wholly unlike any that he had ever written before—yet it came naturally out of his origins in a Scottish Calvinistic household. No such literary adventure has happened in my time, and in the verdict of Edinburgh one more triumph has been added to

the playwright's long list. But I have not yet had the chance to see how Elizabeth Bergner rises to the opportunity which James Barrie has created for her.

If I were in doubt of her talent, I should find myself singularly reassured by the references to her in the Autobiography of as fine an actress as my generation knew. Miss Lena Ashwell in *Myself a Player* tells many amusing stories, but essentially she is the preacher of a high and passionate art in which the artist seeks to create, through his or her own personality something "individual and unique"—as, to take the author's instance, Miss Bergner does. But how is it done? Not primarily by any gesture of the body, but in the mind. "Dame Madge Kendal said that the art of acting was concentrated imagination, and in fact, when the image is felt the words do become alive." It is not by cut-throat violence that an actor can thrill us with his words, "Macbeth does murder sleep." He must have before his inner vision some horror-striking realization of what the metaphor conveys. Miss Ashwell tells us from her own experience extraordinary cases in which she, while acting, caused the audience to see, embodied on the stage, what actually was not there.

The conclusion of this book, everywhere chivalrous in temper, is a plea for the freedom of the actor as against the drill-sergeant methods of the producer; and the best ground of hope she sees is a return to the tradition of the actor-manager. Let us hope that the actor-manager may realize that the first essential is to make your audience hear. Modern actors, instructed by modern producers, are so concerned to be "natural" that their speech is not always audible half-way down the stalls. It would be a blessing if, as Miss Ashwell suggests, critics would take to judging plays from the back of the gallery. But blessed above all it would be if only actors and actresses made such efforts as Miss Ashwell describes in her own career to develop the qualities of the human voice. Perhaps not three in a generation would attain to such beauty as she reached—together with Miss Irene Vanbrugh and Mrs. Patrick Campbell—among those who came after Ellen Terry. Yet short of this, many an actress of today who could now justly be accused of "squalling" (as Miss Ashwell was by G. B. S. in her first days) might after such application as this book describes become, as Miss Ashwell became, "music to hear."

# THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

## A FIRST DRAFT

By EDMUND BLUNDEN

**BOSWELL'S JOURNAL OF A TOUR TO THE HEBRIDES.** Now first published from the original manuscript. Edited by Frederick A. Pottle and Charles H. Bennett. *Heinemann*. 21s.

THE first edition of Boswell's *Tour*, one year after the death of his "illustrious fellow-traveller," contained a long dedication to Edmund Malone, in which we read, "You have obligingly taken the trouble to peruse the original manuscript of this *Tour*, and can vouch for the strict fidelity of the present publication." For almost a century and a half that manuscript was missing, but it turned up at last mainly complete in "an old croquet-box in an unused cupboard" at Castle Malahide; and the discovery made clear the exact nature of Malone's perusal. He did a great deal of the modifying and the rearranging which preceded the appearance of his friend's narrative in print. Boswell could hardly have found a wiser assistant for his immediate purpose, an *interim* book about Dr. Johnson.

But in the handsome publication now to be noticed the chief business has been to eject Malone and his system of control, and to reinstate Boswell all by himself with this Hebridean Journal as far as possible in its unregenerate condition. The editors, whose labours may be appreciated in a moment by a glance at

the facsimiles of what they have deciphered, do not exaggerate Malone into a monster, but they do not disguise their satisfaction at being able to expunge his revision and that of Boswell himself. As they see it, the "original record, untrimmed and unpolished, is more entertaining to our age" than the book so long familiar and so beautifully edited in recent years by Dr. R. W. Chapman. They declare, too—but they will not carry all their readers with them in their tendency—that "we are now able to read the *Tour*, not as a book about Johnson, but as one of the best chapters in Boswell's autobiography."

Among the excisions for which Malone seems to have been responsible rather than Boswell, several passages enrich the autobiography of a hearty, grateful good eater. Unfavourable circumstances could not deter him. In Mr. Simson's ship, on the way from Skye to Mull, it transpired already that Boswell "became very sick," but the matter was not stated very fully. It is now, and the record for October 3rd, 1773, becomes quite gorgeous:

I kept above, that I might have fresh air. I eat bread and cheese, and drank whisky and rum and brandy. The worthy Bailie had sent with us half a sheep and biscuits and apples and beer and brandy. There was a little room



or den at the forecastle, with two beds, and a fire in it. Dinner was dressed, and I was persuaded to go down. I eat boiled mutton and boiled salt herring, and drank beer and punch. I exulted in being a stout seaman, while Mr. Johnson was quite in a state of annihilation. But I soon had a change.

Considerations of style—of increased dignity, of clearer sense, of keener point—resulted in many of the minor differences between the manuscript and the work given to the public. No doubt Malone's scrutiny was influential in these. A very good example occurs under the date October 5th, 1773, when the travellers had gone ashore on Coll, and Johnson and the minister had both talked with grimness. Boswell's comment on Johnson's unaccommodating way was formerly published with this ending :

I have often maintained that it is better he should retain his own manner. Pliability of address I conceive to be inconsistent with that majestic power of mind which he possesses, and which produces such noble effects. A lofty oak will not bend like a supple willow.

The original provides a curious comparison :

I have often maintained, that it is better so. Pliability of address I take to be inconsistent with that majestic power which he has, and which produces such noble effects. A bar of iron nor a lofty oak will not bend like a supple willow, or like many plants between those. What though he presses down feeble beings in his course? They get up again like stalks of ripe grass.

Another source of modifications and of suppressions was the fear of shocking the reader, and in this respect Boswell is now and then as prim as an Early Victorian. He did not, in fact, note down much, in this stretch of his journal, which could have upset even the Rev. Mr. Bowdler; but he saw to it that the few risky entries were not printed. He struck out one or two of them with plenty of ink, but not enough to defeat the

persistence of Messrs. Pottle and Benne. Thanks to them, one notable mystery ceases to be a mystery. On September 16th, 1773, "after the ladies were gone" Johnson told the company that if he kept a seraglio, the women should all wear linen or cotton gowns. This amused Boswell, but Johnson did not see the joke, and according to the old version of the Tour, "retaliated with such keener sarcastick wit, and such a variety of degrading images" as to make Boswell wish himself elsewhere. What was the sting? Mr. Macqueen (we are now told) asked Johnson if he would admit Boswell to his seraglio. "'Yes,' said he, 'if he were properly prepared; and he would make a very good eunuch. He'd be a fine gay animal. He'd do his part well.' Boswell tried to counter-attack, but only drew more fire: "he returned to his office as eunuch and expatiated upon his success with such fluency that it really hurt me."

Presently (and this also is among the passages dropped by Boswell and Malone) the attention of Johnson fastened on his companion's habit of taking a little whisky in the forenoon. Johnson observed that "it was now really becoming serious." One must give Boswell his marks for his simple acceptance of the fact. He only says, "It was lucky that you corrected me. I refrained from it since that time as a regular morning mode"—the italics are the reviewer's.

Like many tourists ancient and modern, Boswell illustrated his diary, but his editors do not press the subject. His sketch of Rorie More's claymore is reproduced, and resembles a claymore up to a point—indeed, the point is quite masterly.

To sum up, they have presented the discovery in a form well suited for general reading, and added to the bookshelves not a volume to supersede the received Tour—that keeps its own merits—but to accompany it.

## FAMILY PORTRAITURE

By R. H. WILENSKI

CONVERSATION PIECES, by Sacheverell Sitwell. With notes on the illustrations by Michael Sevier. *Batsford*. 21s.

If you have friends among the English county gentry you will do well to send them this book as a present. For it is concerned with English conversation portraits, i.e., small portrait groups representing English royalty, nobility and gentry in comfortable, well appointed apartments or agreeable parks; and our friends will surely take a narcissistic pleasure in contemplating the reproductions of these urbane portraits of their kind.

The book will also be appreciated, though not I think to the same extent, by students of art as such. It will please them because it reproduces some attractive pictures by some artists with wit and spirit. But it will also depress and disappoint them because it deals with a form of art where observance of what Mr. Sitwell calls "the grammar of competence" and a certain servility are what the sitters chiefly asked for and are all that in many cases they obtained; and because the text of the book, in which passages of slipshod near-English alternate with purple passages of pre-emptive Paterism is not, I think, likely to convince them that Mr. Sitwell really sets the value he here pretends to set on careful mediocrity in art.

Some years ago Mr. Sitwell gave us a book on southern baroque paintings. He made it clear that he enjoyed these paintings and wished all his readers to

enjoy them too; and he led us to that enjoyment by writing in a baroque style. The method was persuasive. The consonance of the elaborately ornate writing with the art described was irresistible; it converted many whom baroque art had previously repelled or bored. The book was deservedly acclaimed a literary success. But in the book before us there is no such harmony between theme and treatment. It is surely impossible to credit Mr. Sitwell with a passion for "the grammar of competence" when he hands us a sentence such as this:

The National Gallery, at Dublin, has a group of Mrs. Congreve and her children which is a curious specimen of Reinagle. In style, it is like an over-emphasized Zoffany, conspicuously German, in fact, but loaded with pleasant detail, more especially in her absent husband's sword and cocked hat by a table in the corner.

And all readers of *Southern Baroque Art* will recognize the Sacheverell they know, the lover of and the creator of the fantastic, when he asks them to believe that Zoffany had two or more heads and also accessories (horns perhaps and a tail?) and informs them that "the accessories of Zoffany were as valuable as his heads." Is it not unwise, when attempting to interest us in Zoffany, to stir our imagination in this way? And then again it is, I think, unkind to tease and puzzle and mislead us in passages that purport to be history, to tell us for example that Hogarth's pupils included "one or two exquisite Gainsboroughs, the tireless Devis, the ubiquitous

Zoffany." Was Thomas Gainsborough an exquisite? And who was his namesake and fellow exquisite and fellow pupil? Was it father John Gainsborough? Or brother John? Or cousin Thomas? Or the Rev. Humphry? Or Henry Noel, Earl of——? Or Gainsborough Dupont? Why this mystery? Why this coyness about facts?

Many readers, I fancy, will be scarcely less happy with the purple passages. The celebrated "Robert Andrews and his Wife" which Gainsborough left incomplete, possibly because another touch might have destroyed it, is assuredly a delightful picture; the figure representing Mrs. Andrews is piquantly drawn and charmingly coloured in the French eighteenth-century manner which Gainsborough employed in his youth. But Mr. Sitwell creates the wrong *Stimmung* for appreciation when he echoes Pater's famous passage on the *Monna Lisa* in his comments:

Her expression is demure and vaguely disapproving and she is very young, probably not yet twenty. Her hands lie straight in front of her, upon her lap. . . . The skirt or pannier . . . has the colour of blue spray on one day in ten years in the Baltic or Northern Seas. It is no blue of the Mediterranean. Perhaps it is the blue of a fresh water lake where the ripples have slight blue crests and the light runs through the bulrushes out to the swan white calm. . . .

and so on for a page or more. *C'est magnifique*, perhaps, but it is surely too ninetyish for the particular job in hand.

The illustrations are good and numerous. Mr. Sitwell begins with works by Lely and Danckerts and ends with "A shooting party at Sandringham," painted by one J. J. Barker in 1867. He gives colour plates after Copley's "The Children of George III," Hogarth's "Lord George Graham in his Cabin," Zoffany's "Queen Charlotte

and her two eldest Children," Cotman's "Mr. and Mrs. Bennett and their Daughters," Turner's "Musical Party at Petworth" and Thorburn's "The Duke of Wellington with the Children," Lord Charles Wellesley at Strathfield Saye"; he also gives a hundred and twenty-four half-tone illustrations reproducing thirteen paintings by Hogarth, twenty-three by Zoffany, seven by Devis, seven by Stubbs, five by Gainsborough, three by Wheatley and various other works by Wootton, Ward, Gainsborough, Hamilton, Marcellus Laroon, "Old" Nollekens, Highmore, Hayman, Paterson, Ibbetson, Ferneley, Grant, Winterhalter, and other painters. The book has a serviceable index; and the notes on the illustrations give some information about many of the sitters.

It is customary for reviewers to echo their remarks by some critical observations upon the subject treated in the book. There is something to be said against this practice. But since the custom is there I shall follow it that you may discover where I stand. First, then—I judge Zoffany one of the most contemptible artists known to me because he was evidently one of the most prosaic and servile. Secondly, every picture I have seen by Devis has seemed to me the work of an original and witty artist, and I am delighted to meet here the reproductions of so many works unknown to me—"The Family," "Horace Walpole presenting Kitty Clive with a piece of Honeysuckle," and "Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bull, Northcourt." Thirdly, I thank Mr. Sitwell for reproducing Wheatley's "Mr. Ralph Winstanley Wood and her two Children"; and finally I congratulate his ancestors who allowed one Octavius Oakley his fling with the third baronet Sir Reresby Sitwell, aged eight, and his jolly little brother and sisters riding their rocking horse so gaily on the terrace that bordered their park.



## PORTRAIT OF A SOLDIER

By SIR CHARLES PETRIE

THE MAN I KNEW, by The Countess Haig. Moray Press. 18s.

GRAPHIES by relatives are as a general rule not to be recommended, for their authors too often approach their subject from an angle in which impartial criticism is demanded, and this they naturally fail to supply. Lady Haig is to be congratulated upon avoiding this pitfall. The title of her book implies, these pages contain merely a personal account of her late husband, and she makes no attempt to discuss matters upon which a widow could be expected to express an unbiased opinion. Her work, in effect, is a description of the great soldier as she saw him, and it is very valuable on that score. The absence of an index is to be deplored.

For reasons with which the public is familiar, she was prevented from quoting from Earl Haig's diaries, but it is clear that the present narrative is based upon them. During the war he was in the habit of enclosing a few pages of diary with each of his letters to his wife, so that the record of events is contemporary. It is, however, to be regretted that no details are given about his immediate ancestry or his early military career, and both must have had considerable influence upon the development of his character. It is true that the title she has chosen to some extent justifies Lady Haig in this omission, but the book would have been more interesting had she consented to stretch a point.

Lady Haig emerges from this study a man with little charm, save to those few who knew him intimately, but possessed of intense devotion to duty. In this respect he was in the British tradition, for few

of our great commanders, save Marlborough and Roberts, have possessed personal magnetism, a quality with which the naval heroes have been amply supplied. Yet such judges of character as King Edward VII and King George V picked upon Haig, and if he owed much to Royal favour, he was far removed from being a Court soldier. On occasion, as Lady Haig admits, he could be ungracious enough, but whatever minor asperities can be charged to his account, they weigh as nothing in the balance compared with what he did for the ex-Service men. Perhaps the best epithet to apply to him would be "dour."

With his strategy we are not concerned here, though his opinion of that of others is sometimes given, and it is interesting to read that, in respect of the attack on the Fifth Army in March, 1918, "Douglas pointed out that what was wrong was not Gough's generalship but the fact that the War Cabinet had so weakened the forces, and failed to make adequate arrangements for keeping the divisions up to strength, that there were not enough men to withstand the German assault." With that view few will now disagree. Joffre he liked, but thought that he was too liable to change his mind, while Nivelle he found continually subject to pressure from political circles in Paris. Indeed, it was not until Foch took over that there was any real unity of command in the French Army.

Lady Haig has a good deal to say of Mr. Lloyd George's treatment of her husband, which certainly left much to be desired. Haig was continually ignored, and it seems to have been the Prime Minister's intention from the

beginning to put him under the orders of the French. Not to put too fine a point on it, he did not receive the consideration which one gentleman has a right to expect from another. The culminating insult was after the Armistice, when he was asked to ride in the fifth carriage in a procession to the French Embassy, where there was to be a luncheon to which he was not even invited. Mr. Lloyd George's strictures on Haig's generalship may or may not be justified, but his own bad manners were inexcusable. In any event, if he had so low an opinion of the British Commander-in-Chief it is not easy to see why he did not have the latter recalled.

Like most soldiers, Haig distrusted politicians, and certainly no British general since Marlborough was so hampered by them. The only one for whom he seems to have had a sincere regard was, curiously enough, Asquith. This mistrust can be understood when we read that it was his opinion, based upon experience, that one might as well announce a forthcoming operation to the enemy as mention it at a meeting of the Cabinet. There were also attempts on the part of the Coalition to use Haig as propaganda before the General Election of 1918 which served to deepen his suspicion.

There are not so many side-lights as one might have expected on the circles in which Haig moved. Kitchener is portrayed in a more kindly manner than usual, and the pomp of the Vice-Regal Court under Curzon is well described in a few sentences. It is also interesting to hear that the Kaiser wished to surrender to Haig personally, but was deterred because he was told that he would be murdered before he could do so.

Above all, there is the account of the foundation of the British Legion, for which so many hundreds of thousands have to this day to bless the name of the Commander-in-Chief.

**BALFOUR — THE LAST PHASE**  
**ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR**, Vol.  
 by Blanche E. C. Dugdale. *Hutchinson*.  
 18s.

THE most fascinating chapters of Mrs. Dugdale's second volume of the Balfour biography are those which deal with the closing years of Lord Balfour's life. The man, who, at the age of sixty-three, had resigned the Leadership of the Conservative Party in the expectation that his active public career was over, lived on for another twenty years, in which his powers, so far from declining, actually expanded. His life indeed presents an arresting contradiction to the belief that since there is a retirement age in most professions at sixty or sixty-five years of age there must be a similar period in the career of politicians when they have exhausted their capacity for being of supreme service to the State. It was after Lord Balfour had passed the span of life allotted to man by the Psalmist that he played his decisive part in piloting the League of Nations through its early difficulties, and bringing from the Washington Conference the only real victory that has ever fallen to disarmament policy. I found it difficult to realize as I read the account of his last years, when his mellow judgment was at the service of successive Governments and his incomparable influence invariably exercised in defence of liberal causes, that this was "the Balfour" of the 'eighties, or the ruthless Party leader of the early years of the century.

Yet Balfour was not himself conscious of any change in his outlook. To the last he would not admit the possibility of having been wrong on any major issue. "What remains of your Irish policy now?" Mrs. Dugdale asks him in 1928. "Everything, everything," he replies. "Look at the position of Ulster now. And what was the Ireland when the Free State Government took over? The Ireland that *we* made." It

onishing that any elderly Conservative could look upon the Ireland that emerged from the Treaty—a settlement that to both sides would have appeared thinkable in the early years of the struggle—and not regret his opposition, twenty years before, to the Gladstonian mutation of Parliamentary Home Rule.

But Balfour had no philosophy of popular Government. If he had, he could never have supported the House of Lords in carrying their policy of blocking Liberal Bills until it culminated in the rejection of the Budget of 1909 and the reprisals of the Parliament Act. Though his Party was overwhelmingly defeated in the 1906 election, Balfour was convinced that it still had the right to continue governing the country through the House of Lords. He saw the coming collision, "yet," writes Mrs. Dugdale, with obvious approval of the attitude, "Balfour never attempted to evade the challenge. Least of all did he desire to see the House of Lords preserve its powers by declining to exercise them. Nor was he an enthusiast for its reform." But how could Parliament work under such conditions? Did it never occur to him that a House of Lords that put no obstacle in the way of Conservative measures and created an impenetrable barrier against all Liberal legislation that was so remotely controversial, was a travesty of Democracy.

I cannot understand how a man of his insight and character could ever have committed the supreme folly of the rejection of the land taxes. They did not present an intolerable burden, and they could easily have been repealed when the Conservatives returned to office.

Mrs. Dugdale unashamedly exposes the root cause of the Conservative resistance. The determination to resist the land taxes at all costs," she writes, "sprang from the irresistible instinct of self-preservation in the class from which the Party

derived its tradition and much of its strength. The land taxes and the land valuation clauses attached to them, were a death blow to the landed gentry." Fortunately for the country that instinct of class selfishness no longer governs the Conservative Party.

But it is not the Balfour of middle life fighting for indefensible privileges that posterity will delight to recall, but the Balfour of the grand years of elder statesmanship. No man, whatever his party, can fail to read of Balfour's splendid conception of the new Palestine or the magnetism that he exercised in the Assemblies of the League of Nations or his wise handling of the post-war imperial problems without admitting that the full flowering period even though it came late in life, was as fine as anything in the careers of his great contemporaries.

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**RETURN TO MALAYA**, by R. O. H. Bruce Lockhart. *Putnam*. 10s. 6d. for

SENTIMENTAL journeys are usually extremely dangerous things. Distance, as Sir Walter Scott so justly observed, is one of the most valuable aids to the romantic imagination. All the more credit then to Mr. Bruce Lockhart for his rich enjoyment and delightful account of a recent visit to Malaya and the Dutch East Indies after an absence of a quarter of a century.

In his first book, *Memoirs of a British Agent*, Mr. Lockhart described the three years that he spent in Malaya early in the century. He had been sent to open up a rubber estate in a remote district where there were no other white men, and he had caused a mild sensation by carrying off Amai, the beautiful ward of the Dato' Klana, a local prince. This high-handed proceeding almost caused political complications. It seriously hurt the Dato', an old friend, with whom Mr. Lockhart played football. Acute malaria or perhaps poisoning put an end to the incident and the author, now an "emaciated bundle," was packed off to England via Japan and America. Ultimately, some time after the war, Mr. Lockhart reached Fleet Street as a member of the staff of one of Lord Beaverbrook's newspapers. This could hardly be described as a restful occupation, and it is not surprising to find Mr. Lockhart peering out into the fog outside his office window and longing for the grateful warmth and restful beauty of Port Dickson, one of the loveliest seaside places in the world. His desire to return was also influenced, as he says, "by memories of Amai and by a Loti-esque sentiment to pay a last tribute to her grave." The beginning of the trip was not altogether auspicious. On walking into a travel agency in the Haymarket to inspect the list of his fellow passengers in the Dutch liner, Mr. Lockhart read opposite a whole string of cabins the inscription, "Lord Beaverbrook and

party." Accommodation for the travellers had also been reserved in other parts of the world, and, in the end, Lord Beaverbrook went to South America.

The account of Mr. Lockhart's trip is altogether fascinating. He has the expert journalist's eye for essential coupled with a love of the country and an understanding of the Malays which make *Return to Malaya* the best and most comprehensive account of the place, its peoples and problems, that has appeared in recent years.

As Mr. Lockhart is the first to admit the best picture of Anglo-Malay relations in the "Land where it is always afternoon" is to be found in M. Henri Fauconnier's *Malaisie*, but *Return to Malaya* depicts the ever changing ease of the influence of English education and of English and American films on the numerous races which comprise the population. It shows the differences between the European community caused by the great enlargement of the Singapore Base. Here has changed, as Mr. Lockhart discovered, the lot of the civil servant. The pervasive interest of Whitehall, and the visits of peripatetic politicians have done something to curb the initiative of the man on the spot.

Of all these matters and of the differences between Dutch and English methods in handling administrative and mercantile questions Mr. Lockhart writes with the greatest fairness and an evident determination not to be biased by the golden days of the past. His own particular brand of gently romantic sentimentalism is ideal for the task he set himself. He was not allowed to escape the unexpected. He went prepared to strew roses on the grave of his lost love. He found that she was not dead. They met once more, and it is only fair to leave what passed at that memorable meeting to the reader of this fascinating book.

ERIC GILLET.

**UNIQUE DICTATOR**, by Desmond Ryan. *Barker*. 10s. 6d.

**THE FOUR GREEN FIELDS**, by George O'Brien, Litt.D. *Talbot Press*. 3s. 6d.

It is a question whether a dictator can really be called a dictator when he may be equated with a policy, and depends for political power on a party-machine, or a public tradition, capable of carrying on that policy without him; one can, for example, imagine Germany behaving in precisely the same way, today, without Adolf Hitler. But, in the opinion of this latest biographer of Mr. de Valera, not merely is this a unique dictator, in so far as he employs the usual democratic machinery of government, but a unique man. Mr. de Valera, in other words, is presented to us here as a leader who virtually *is* his own party, and nine-tenths of its policy; who, above all—and it is offered as the secret of his power—embodies in himself, by his bigness or littleness (opinions vary) a national tradition.

That has been well put by an old and unbending opponent of Mr. de Valera, the late Kevin O'Higgins:

Patience, wisdom, tolerance, a great compassion for the multitude struck one as distinguishing marks of Mr. de Valera. He seemed to constitute himself in a special manner the guardian of the civil population, and as well became a national leader, he allowed himself to draw no narrow distinction between those who gave and those who withheld support. One always felt that however others might lose their heads in the zeal of a new-found militarism, this man thought, and spoke and acted for an entire people.

After the Treaty *débâcle*, O'Higgins felt that Mr. de Valera had changed; but, then, rival parties had emerged for the first time, and the rivalry based itself on different interpretations of nationalism.

This being so, it is the misfortune of every biographer of Mr. de Valera that he must concern himself less with a

human being than with an embodiment. What is this national, or public tradition, which Mr. de Valera so rigidly asserts? What is the magic of this policy? If Mr. de Valera were asked he would give a lecture on Irish history. Mr. Ryan does not even attempt to answer these questions, and he deals only with the history of his subject's life. In the end, we are given a lively picture of the man, while all that makes him a dictator, all that power of his whereby he has anæsthesised opposition, is left either unconsidered or, at best, to be inferred.

One must say, however, that Mr. Ryan's book is so packed with documents, the details of events, speeches, and so forth; and so nicely emphasises the key points in Mr. de Valera's fluctuating career, that inferences are repeatedly invited. If they are not the "correct" inferences Mr. Ryan must blame himself, blame particularly his failure to cover the period between 1924, the end of the "Civil War," and the entry into power—a vital period, the most vital period of all, in fact, since in those ten years Mr. de Valera formulated the policy he is now implementing. Similarly, the period since Mr. de Valera became President is shamelessly dismissed in a half a dozen skimpy pages. In vain, too, one searches for some consideration of Mr. de Valera's attitude to the Catholic Church in Ireland, that greatest of all political influences; or for some definition of his attitude to the Gaelic Revival, that next most powerful weapon: one wants to know how he has hitched these two stars to his sound-wagon, and one is not told. There is not, either, any adequate description of Mr. de Valera's social outlook.

The fourth estate of this Ireland, Ulster, does not appear in the index to Mr. Ryan's book; it forms the subject of Dr. George O'Brien's thoughtful essay. An historian and an economist, he deals refreshingly with the irrefutable facts of social history. His general conclusion



is best found in the short sentence—"The Plantation of Ulster succeeded only too well": to which may be added his forecast that the present territorial division in Ireland cannot alter until the data are altered—these alterations being the unlikely decline of the present vigorous Protestantism of the North; or the removal of the traditional dependence of the British Government on the allies of the North in English politics. In spite of a certain amount of repetitiousness, and, from an economist, a peculiar unreadiness to underline the economic reasons for the rise of an Ulster minority, and its latter-day political consolidation, this essay is one of the most readable, brief accounts of the "Ulster Question" outside the mass of literature on the subject at the period of the union. It differs from all others, however, in so far as it is that unusual thing—the essay of a good-humoured realist.

SEAN O'FAOLAIN.

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OUR FREEDOM AND ITS RESULTS, by Five Women. Edited by Ray Strachey. *The Hogarth Press*. 8s. 6d.

"SUCCESSFUL revolutions," writes Mary Agnes Hamilton in the first section of this volume, "have a trick of blurring their own outlines." Undoubtedly to-day—and by no means only among the very young—there is a tendency to disparage the liberating democratic movements of the recent past. In 1913, "cleverness" and modernity assumed the guise of rebellious Fabianism; in 1936, "cleverness" feels a compulsion to express reactionary views in order to demonstrate the degree to which it differs from the war generation and their predecessors. Unconsciously influenced by Fascist doctrines, the "up-to-date" attitude towards the women's revolution tends to be mildly contemptuous. The fact that this revolution was but one part—though an exceptionally dramatic part—of the whole story of democracy becomes lost to view. Its protagonists are described as "serious," "earnest," "intense"—adjectives, once complimentary, which have now acquired a somewhat derogatory connotation, and give little idea of the passion with which the pioneers of yesterday set out to attain the all-but-unattainable.

The five writers, of whom Mrs. Strachey is one and whose work she edits, leave us in no doubt that the feminist pioneers brought about a transition in values and standards which has remodelled the social world from top to bottom—for men as well as women. Their efforts have altered beyond description, not merely the circumstances and atmosphere of public life, but private relationships within the home. One of the chief omissions of this book is its failure to deal—except indirectly through its account of legal reforms and its references to



married women's employment—with the psychological effect of the women's movement upon the family. The change by which the private individual in his millions has been most affected is surely the new standard of companionship between married partners, the growth of friendship and confidence between mothers and their children. Mrs. Hamilton touches lightly upon this profound revolution in one paragraph only of her otherwise admirable essay on "Changes in Social Life." Despite its omissions and its loose construction, the literary quality of this chapter and its fine concluding paragraph set it apart in grace and vitality from the contributions of her four predecessors.

These predecessors are all experts in their particular field, and since they are not professional writers it would be exacting to expect verbal elegance from their informative essays. Miss Eleanor Rathbone's sound and statesmanlike chapter on "Changes in Public Life" is marred by undue attention to trivial disagreements with organizations whose members she describes as "Me Too" or "old" feminists, but there is a relevant urgency in her emphasis upon the "criminal folly of society's whole attitude towards mothers and children." Until motherhood is recognized as a privileged service rather than a professional handicap, much of the present vaunted "equality" will remain shadow rather than substance.

In "Changes in Law" and "Changes in Employment," Miss Erna Reiss and Mrs. Ray Strachey contribute straightforward, well-documented summaries. "Changes in Sex Morality," by Miss Alison Neilans, begins by outlining conditions which to modern youth will appear more typical of decadent Rome than of the surface respectability of Victorian England. Her vital, downright essay shows that

though the political women's movement did not specifically attack the "closed stale atmosphere" of nineteenth century morality, a deep change in moral values was its inevitable consequence. Nothing could prove more clearly than the comparative decency of to-day that the social and moral standards of any country are reflected in the position of its women.

VERA BRITAIN.

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**A COTSWOLD YEAR**, by C. Henry Warren. *Geoffrey Bles*. 7s. 6d.

MR. WARREN'S book moves at the pace of life at Woodend, the remote Cotswold village where he settled, and about which he writes. The diary form allows of a discursiveness which suits his theme; it is the thinking aloud of a man of observation and leisure, attached to no particular branch of country life, but having that aggregate and approximate view of the comparative new-comer.

He has been at Woodend long enough to be accepted by the inhabitants. Being un-superior and sociable, he soon made friends. Such a person, typical of a section of the community to-day, finds himself out of tune with a mechanical civilization, with an instinct to return to be "in mind and body near the sources of creation" (his quotation). Yet a stranger there too, though the strangeness is something of a wistful wandering about a place that once was home.

Farmer Flack, who returned from a bid for a wider life in Canada to the few poor acres of his native place; Jesse Gable, the craftsman who must always be making or mending something, from a dry stone wall to a model of an owl; the blacksmith, pedlars—Mr. Warren sketches the fading lines of what was once the framework of English life. He is neither at one with that progress which is seeping in from the towns, nor with preservationism. A ruin he prefers to be, organically a ruin;

falling naturally back into the earth. As for the anodyne of the idyllic, he has had his misgivings of his pleasure in rural peace, and, facing them, found a reality in values which can discern between tractor-bluster and the purely picturesque.

The need for this is what makes the writing of a country book difficult. The mere mention of such words as "scythe," "farm-house," "harvest-waggon," carries with it a pressure of sentiment which hampers clean and clear statement about the country. Mr. Warren's country diary comes pretty well out of this test, particularly in view of the fact that he has not been, apparently, technically implicated in the life he describes. On the other hand, he has been always ready to lean over a gate and chat with farmers and labourers, listen to the stories of tramps. The extracts—here the diary form helps again—are quite short and break off cleanly. Perhaps most successful are certain moments, encounters with itinerants, given without comment.

He includes with Woodend the great view of the Severn valley to the Black Mountains, which is spread before it. Storms brew there; the fume of Gloucester is always visible, reminder of a different life. He explores that view, by bus and local train (which themselves provide humanities from which the owner-driver is insulated), and on foot. Wild life and human intercourse succeed each other; glimpses of old crafts and modern innovations; the ruin of the Stroudwater Canal and the interior of a modern milking shed.

One gets the impression that Mr. Warren has been fortunate in his Woodend. It seems more remote and self-contained than many villages these days. But perhaps that is merely saying that he has managed to convey something of the native quality of country life in his diary of a Cotswold year.

ADRIAN BELL.

**FOOL'S GARDEN**, by Muriel Stuart  
*Cape. 7s. 6d.*

**THE GARDENER'S ENGLAND**, by  
Eric Parker. *Seely Service. 8s. 6d.*

**THE OLD HALLS AND MANOR  
HOUSES OF NORTHAMPTON-  
SHIRE**, by J. Alfred Gotch. *Batsford.  
21s.*

EACH of these three books is, in its own way, very good indeed; but *Fool's Garden* deserves to be spoken of with some high superlatives. It is the right sort of gardening book, well removed on the one hand from the authoritative on the other hand from the sloppy. Miss Stuart, as her index shows, has a shrewd knowledge of plants; she adores this garden of hers. But one never has the feeling, as with, for instance, Robinson of crabbed and disillusioned age frowning on youth or, as with the popular garden fictionists, that in another paragraph she will pick up her skirts and run. She strings off her high-sounding names, but it is really to amuse herself and to oblige us. Occasionally she is sentimental, but it is the best kind of sentimentality; she is certainly romantic but it is the romanticism of nature. Her garden was small and, when she took it, appalling: a strip, like thousands of strips, boxed in by hideous fences. The story of how, with her son Adam she planted it, transformed it, idealised it and finally had to leave it is told in *Fool's Garden*. And it is very well told with genuine feeling, with knowledge and humility, humorously and with gusto and delicacy. Miss Stuart is, in fact, a poet first and a gardener afterwards, and if her garden was half as good as her book it was truly enchanting. Finally, a double bouquet is due to Miss Irene Hawkins, whose fifteen lithographs of fruit and flowers are superb. They have a kind of delicacy hard to describe: it is powdery, almost shadowy and yet quite alive. Altogether this is marriage of true minds, and a very happy book. With all this Mr. Parker cannot really



compete. He is a star fixed in a definite orbit: a good writer, sober, unfanciful, with a sound background of knowledge. His book, however, should have been called "Mr. Parker's England," for we are offered only the things of his own special delight, his childhood garden, his garden in the Surrey hills, his own fancies and predilections. His book will not slow the roof off, but it has deep delight in it and warmth and a kind of affectionate solidity. It has none of that cheap transparence and paltriness now, unhappily, so profitable and popular.

Lastly, a book that is less of a book than a memorial to one of the best and now least-known of English counties, the once elegant, park-like and now half-industrialized Northamptonshire. Lying on that rich stone backbone that runs from Rutland down through the Cotswolds to Somerset, it has, at one time and another, produced a wealth of domestic architecture that is staggering. There are houses pictured in Mr. Gotch's book that make one weep: the half-ruined Kirby Hall, roofless, windowless, standing in isolation at the end of a cart-track in fields, and yet absolutely incomparable in line and feeling, indisputable in its air of being an epic; Deene Park, solid and yet almost shining by the lake; Burghley, incredibly vast; New Lyveden, roofless, never finished; Rethorpe, extremely stately and yet somehow as homely as a manor; Easton Neston, grandly eighteenth century; and many others, houses as lovely as their own names—Stoke Bruerne, Castle Ashby, Sulgrave Manor, Aynho, Stoke Albany, Rockingham Castle, Lamport Hall. It is a richness that quite transfigures the otherwise plain bread-and-butter Northamptonshire country on which, since before Elizabeth, artists of all classes from local masons to Inigo Jones and Wren, have conferred incomparable legacies. Kirby alone, even half ruined, is unsurpassed anywhere.

H. E. BATES.

WHICH WAY TO PEACE? by Bertrand Russell. *Michael Joseph.* 7s. 6d.

MR. BERTRAND RUSSELL answers the question posed in his title by pointing the road of absolute pacifism, but admits that he came to this position only after a long period of genuine doubt as to the right policy. It may be surmised that the present order of his chapters reproduces something very like the movement of his mind through that period to his final conclusion.

First, he confronts—or, more exactly, is confronted by—that "imminent danger of war" which is the common fear of every responsible man and government in the world today. Next he inquires what will be the nature of that war, and consults and quotes the military experts to discover it a mainly aerial matter, soon over perhaps but only because intensely destructive of civilian life, morale and organization, and leading almost inevitably to stringent military control as the only means of coping with widespread social chaos. It will be a war in which, as Mr. Baldwin has said, "the only defence is offence, which means that you have to kill women and children more quickly than the enemy if you want to save yourselves."

No man clearly, he feels, can contemplate such a prospect without seeking by some means to avert it. One by one he studies the more widely advocated preventive methods. There is the policy of Splendid Isolation. But an imperial power, it seems to him on examination, cannot isolate itself, for the world from which it wants to hold apart will turn against it a combination needing both great strength and geographical remoteness to withstand; the British Empire might achieve the former, but the latter is in its nature impossible. There is the policy of Collective Security. The theory of it seems to him admirable: "I believe the ultimate cure for war will be found through a development of the



idea which led to the creation of the League of Nations." But in practice it has failed every test put upon it, and not only does the will to make it work seem lacking, but the speed of decisive attack under modern conditions makes it, in the absence of a standing international armed force, probably impracticable. There is the old policy, to which the European nations seem more and more frankly returning, of defensive alliances. But the alliance of Britain with France and Russia, or, alternatively, with Germany and Italy, offers no assurance of peaceful settlement of cankering problems. Lastly, there is the actual British policy of Expedients, a dealing with each situation as it arises according to the circumstances of the moment—the policy which, as much as anything, has landed us where we are today.

At this point, rather out of its logical place, he introduces the problem whether there are not some wars—for national independence, for democracy, for what you will—one should not seek to evade, but frankly face and fight that one's cause may prevail. The question here, he suggests, is less whether a cause is worth fighting for than whether any cause can survive the war fought for it.

So the board is swept clear of every militant answer to the threat of war. There remains then, in his view, only pacifism, complete and unqualified, and it is to the exploration of pacifism's possibilities that he devotes his last five chapters. At least, by what has gone before, he has made out a negative case for their careful consideration. What may be urged against his positive arguments is that, in suggesting what amounts to a total reversal of national policy (for a pacifist imperialism is a contradiction in terms) he glides rather too easily over the vital working difficulties to prove very persuasive to those not already of his own outlook.

GEOFFREY WEST.

**LANCER AT LARGE**, by F. Yeats Brown. *Gollancz*. 10s. 6d.

MR. YEATS-BROWN belongs to the same tradition as General Gordon, Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Lady Hester Stanhope, T. E. Lawrence, and C. F. Andrews. It is a peculiarly English tradition. Other nations in their bewilderment sometimes murmur, "Secret Service." They just do not understand so intimate, even respectful, a relationship with Oriental races that have been subdued by British arms or gold, and often incorporated by British statesmanship in the Empire. In *Lancer at Large* Mr. Yeats-Brown describes his impressions on re-visiting India after a long interval, and at the same time his spiritual adventures there in his quest for a *guru* or teacher. The two themes largely overlap, since he looks on contemporary India with an eye mainly pre-occupied with Absolutism. It is not without significance that his *guru*, when he finds him at Cape Comorin, has been in the I.C.S., and that he turns sadly away from New Delhi—"This overgrown and inglorious Golder's Green"—and passes an exalted night in the Taj.

If I might venture to separate out the constituent elements in Mr. Yeats-Brown's attitude towards India (a task that is made easier because of the agreeable ingenuousness of all his writing) they would be as follows: (a) An instinctive sympathy with Hindu thought and practice, extending to belief in reincarnation, and an instinctive liking for individual Indians; (b) a considerable backwash from his Indian cavalry, pig-sticking days which makes him sad and ill at ease in scenes that remind him of them, and yet gives a glamour to "fifty or sixty pages written in an adolescent hand which I recognize with startled affection" of the Bareilly Tent Club Log; (c) a "preference for men of action

over the masters of high debate" and so for deeds, even for a public school at Dehra Dun "for the sons of Indian gentlemen . . . and conducted entirely on English lines," and for Indian ladies at the Calcutta races who "are highly emancipated, and bet, smoke, enamel their nails, use lip-stick, drive cars, go to the movies (and why not?), but however fast the pace, however hectic the fever of modernity, remain themselves."

Such an attitude of mind does not conduce to any great liking for recent constitutional changes in India—changes which, however, Mr. Yeats-Brown accepts as being inevitable. His sympathies are all the time with Indian India rather than with Anglo-India, though his range of admiration includes Lord Willingdon, Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and even so arrant a "master of high debate" as Mr. Satyamurthi. He has little hope for Indian Democracy, but much of an Indian spiritual renaissance. As he has seen the possibility of his own salvation by taking the "illuminated path" that the Chidambaram Swami started him on, so he thinks that India may save the world and establish a thousand years of peace by making possible the "exploration of the borderland between Being and Not-Being."

The procedure for getting on to the "illuminated path" is described in *Lancer at Large* in some detail. It begins with a glass of water and performing the purposes of nature, and reaches its climax in "repeating the Word of Power, OM, five times, soundlessly, while breathing inwards, and five times, soundlessly, while breathing outwards." Mr. Yeats-Brown found it entirely beneficial, and expresses the hope that "it may pass through some friendly eyes to some few sympathetic minds, whom only it can help." How far is this hope likely to be realized? The answer is, perhaps, OM.

MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE.

**SALAVIN**, by Georges Duhamel. Translated by Gladys Billings. Dent. 8s. 6d.

**THE CROQUET PLAYERS**, by H. G. Wells. Chatto & Windus. 3s. 6d.

**BREAD AND WINE**, by Ignazio Silone. Translated by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

THE retiring secretary of a local Residents' Society was reported lately in the Press to have been given a large clock, which he handed back the next day "because he had discovered that it was of German make." Luckily the novel reader has not yet reached this pitch of imbecility, and it is still possible for publishers to give us translations of foreign books without having them thrown back through their windows. I hope not too many will be shocked at finding that *Salavin*, the best novel published in England in 1936, is "of Frenchmake." It is, in fact, a book which many people will like.

Of those twin founders of the Unanimist movement, M. Jules Romains and M. Georges Duhamel, the latter is likely to gain more ground in England. Romains gives an immense and incomparable picture of modern Paris, but the length of his book (now in its twelfth or thirteenth volume), the bewilderment of so many characters impartially viewed, the difficulty of following all his plots and sub-plots, the expense finally of acquiring almost a library in the shape of one novel, has made readers pause; it has made me pause, I may say. Duhamel does not run to more than four novels at a time; and *Salavin*, his most important work, has been packed by Messrs. Dent, without overcrowding, into a single volume. Translation good; my only criticism is that there should have been a brief introduction by some capable critic like, say, Mr. Hamish Miles. When was *Salavin* written? We are not told. How far is it part of the Unanimist canon, or does M. Romains now stand in theory alone? After all, not all novel readers are uninterested in



THE  
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erature, and the place in modern  
tters of a book as important as *Salavin*  
serves at least indication.

Unfortunately, in a review as brief as  
e one I am writing, it is impossible to  
tempt a consideration of that sort.  
ompared with *Romains*, however,  
uhamel is inferior in what one might  
all the *mystique* of the city—the abstract  
attern of life, the haunted anonymous  
ves, that strange animation and drift  
the crowd; but superior, immensely  
superior, in his creation of an individual  
ure. (How far is this a lapse from  
nanimism?) *Salavin* himself, a  
abby saint in a bowler, is a fine  
eation: very ordinary, very humble,  
ble and comic by turns. The com-  
arison with *Don Quixote* made by a  
umber of reviewers, though exaggerated,  
not absurd. But where the *Don* was  
agnificent and as cracked as an old  
ower-pot, *Salavin* is weak, introspective,  
ood-natured and odd. Nevertheless,  
has a principle of growth which the  
on has not: from a scarecrow stalking  
e Paris streets at the beginning of the  
ok he becomes a spiritual hero,  
surd enough in some of his actions—  
his chastity which breaks his wife's  
art, in his gifts to relentless spongers,  
s confession of sins he has never com-  
mitted; but we laugh less and less as  
e book proceeds. He becomes tangled  
politics; and the shock of a police raid  
ills his old mother. He goes to live  
one in Tunis, keeping a gramophone  
op and devoting himself to good works  
a hospital; his servant, a black-  
ardly young Arab, shoots him in the  
g and he is brought home to Paris  
die. Perhaps his failure is in himself,  
r he bungles nearly everything he  
es; yet most of the saints of antiquity  
ceeded no better, or when they did  
ceed it was only by withdrawing  
emselves from a world which would  
eventually have maimed and destroyed  
em.

Mr. Wells's *The Croquet Player* may  
seem a trifle after *Duhamel*, a ghost  
story seventy pages long, but literature  
cannot be measured by weight, and this  
is one of Mr. Wells's best books. He  
returns to the earlier mood of *The Invisible*  
*Man* (perhaps his best story) and *The*  
*Kingdom of the Blind*. It is eerie, con-  
vincing and well written—how much  
better the writing than in most of his  
novels! He succeeds in haunting the  
reader with a whole landscape: the  
Fens. With admirable perception Mr.  
Wells begins this tale of a countryside  
ruled by panic, on a café terrace in the  
sunlit South.

Signor Silone's novel of Italy at the  
present day gives us a true, vivid, and  
disturbing picture and has not, of course,  
been published in Italy, where writing  
will no doubt soon cease to function.  
Apart from going to Italy for ourselves  
we could not get a closer view of the  
peasantry under Fascism than he gives  
us in *Bread and Wine*. Hopeless, and  
yet there are pages of delightful comedy.  
Those who do not know *Fortamara*  
should certainly begin reading Signor  
Silone with this novel.

All three good books, one excellent  
—a day out for the novel reviewer  
indeed.

G. W. STONIER.

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## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

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**J. A. Spender** and several other authors of this month's articles have written sufficiently recently in these pages to require no further introduction, but we may just recall that **Edward Hallett Carr** lately left the Foreign Office to become professor of international politics at the University of Wales; that **V. S. Pritchett**, who belongs to the younger generation of critics and novelists, frequently reviews for the FORTNIGHTLY; that **Romilly John** is the author son of Augustus John, and **George Godwin** a journalist who, after farming in British Columbia, wrote the standard life of Captain Vancouver.

**Captain B. H. Liddell Hart** is a military critic and historian of European reputation. His words carry weight, as was proved when he recently wrote two articles in *The Times* which clearly meant that a British Expeditionary Force will not again be sent to fight on the Continent. The Government, if only for political reasons, could do no less than reject the idea, but experts have been struck by his evidence that the conditions of modern war would make our intervention a hazardous venture. Besides being military correspondent of *The Times*, Captain Liddell Hart was military editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and his books on the art of war are many.

**Lord Winterton** entered the House of Commons as its youngest member in 1904, and has been an active Parliamentarian ever since, with a strong interest in Service matters. He was Under-Secretary for India from 1922 to 1924.

**Ivor Brown** left the civil service to

enter literature, and has for years been a dramatic critic of the *Manchester Guardian* and more lately of the *Observer*. He lectures on the art of the theatre at Liverpool University.

**G. D. H. Cole**, most prolific of writers on international economics, has, in his lighter moments and in collaboration with his wife, written several fine blooded detective novels, the latest of which, *The Brothers Sackville*, has just appeared.

**Dr. Cloudesley Brereton** as a practical farmer in Norfolk knows the serious need of stocking the national land against the event of war, and has been running a campaign to stir the Government to action. The friends of the youthful septuagenarian have just heard with interest of his being awarded a prize of 15,000 francs for a book on French tourism.

**Captain Bernard Acworth** is giving much of his time to organizing the shopkeepers' movement against the chain store octopus, a movement which has its counterpart in many other countries. Since his retirement from the Navy he has been chairman of the Liberal Restoration League.

**Rearden Conner** has contributed several stories to the FORTNIGHTLY, but the name of **Ernst Lothar** is less well known. Author, critic and manager of the Reinhardt Theatre in Vienna, Herr Lothar is well known in his own country for his sympathetic treatment of the problems of childhood. His novel, *Kleine Freundin*, was recently filmed under the title of "Little Friend."